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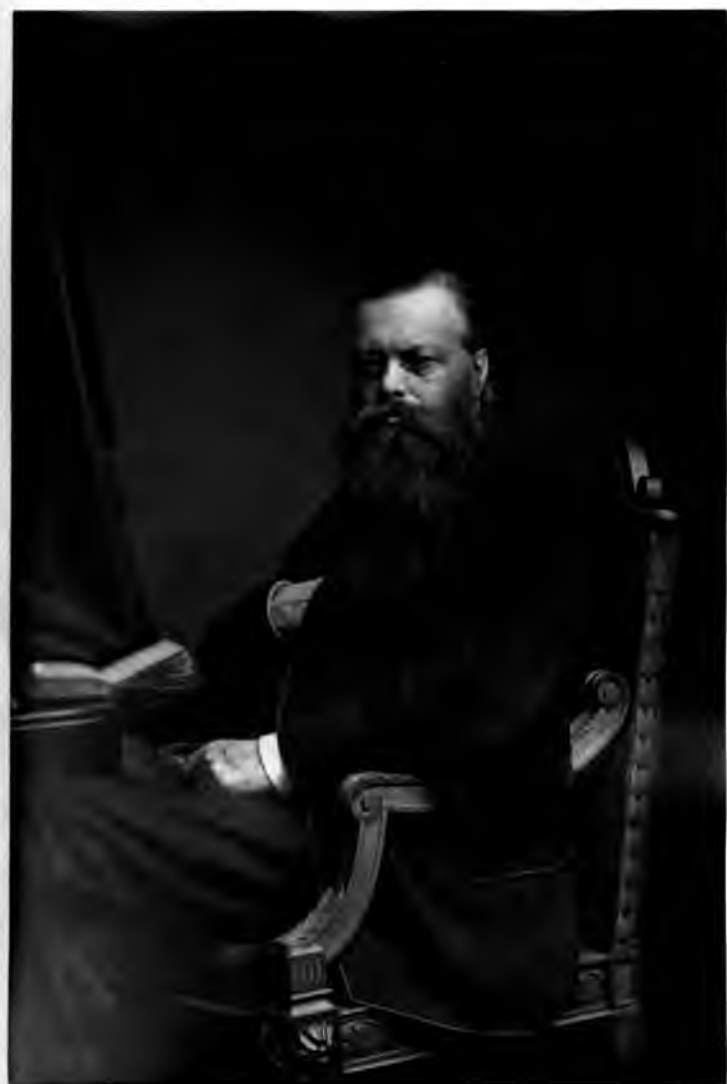




**LIFE OF EDWARD MIALl**











LIFE  
OF  
EDWARD MIALL

*FORMERLY MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR  
ROCHDALE AND BRADFORD*

BY HIS SON  
ARTHUR MIALL

*WITH A PORTRAIT*

London  
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1884  
C

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37, 485-



# Dedication.

TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.,

THIS VOLUME,

CONTAINING SOME MEMORIALS OF THE LIFE

OF ONE WHO LOVED AND HONOURED HIM

FOR FORTY YEARS,

*Is Inscribed,*

WITH THE WARMEST SENTIMENTS OF ESTEEM AND ADMIRATION,

BY THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.


A FEW months after my father's death, which took place in April, 1881, an intimation was given to the public through the press that Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., was about to undertake the task of writing a record of his life. This purpose was formed in compliance with a very earnest request addressed to Mr. Richard by my father's family, and by some of his more intimate friends and political associates. Eventually the proposed arrangement fell through, and the duty of compiling the memoir devolved upon myself. By the kindness of my friend Mr. Richard, I am able to give the reasons which led to this alteration of plan in his own words:—

“I had cherished the hope,” writes Mr. Richard, “that to my lot would fall the honour of erecting some biographical monument to the memory of my



friend Mr. Edward Miall. It would have been a work very congenial to my feelings, for I honoured and loved the man above most of those whom I have encountered in life. And I had in the first instance so far yielded to the temptation, as to have accepted the trust which his family and friends had deposited in my hands, and had done something by way of collecting and arranging the materials and preparing an outline plan for giving effect to the purpose. But I soon found that what with 'the busy idleness' of Parliamentary life, which exhausts a great deal of time and energy, however trivial may be the results, and the pressure of other work to which I was previously committed, and which I could not evade, together, alas! with the consciousness of some diminished capacity for labour, which is one of the saddest penalties of advancing age, I had no prospect of completing the work within reasonable time. I was obliged, therefore, very reluctantly to surrender the task into other hands, and can only rejoice that among the members of his own family has been found one competent to undertake it."

The late Mr. Maurice, his biographer tells us, held that a period of twenty years at least should



elapse between a man's death and any public record of his life. Whatever reasons Mr. Maurice may have had for entertaining this view, I am not alone in the conviction that the career of such a man as Edward Miall, if worthy of narration at all, should be written not alone for coming generations, but also for his contemporaries.

Every month sadly diminishes the number of those who took a part in the earlier struggles on behalf of the principle of religious equality, and who would receive this memoir with especial warmth and friendliness. One to whom I have been indebted for a considerable portion of my material relating to the college days of my father, the Rev. David Lloyd, of Clifton, has passed away since the greater part of the following pages were written. It has been to me a very inspiring thought that here and there would be found readers of this narrative who, like the late Mr. Lloyd, would colour it with their own warmth of feeling and vivid recollections.

But it has been my aim to write faithfully and impartially for any and all whom this volume may reach. The plan which at first commended itself to me was that of giving extracts from

public addresses and articles of my father's authorship, with the barest connecting comment. This, however, I found to be a most unpromising method, and it appeared essential that I should weave them into the narrative form. With all its imperfections I now offer this volume to the public, trusting that whatever may be its defects it will not fail to illustrate the courage, consistency, and Christian devotedness of its subject.

I have to add that the portrait is a reproduction of a photograph taken by H. J. Whitlock, of Birmingham, some ten or twelve years ago.

A. M.

23, ST. SWITHIN'S LANE, LONDON, E.C.,

23rd October, 1884.

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# LIFE OF EDWARD MIALL.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS.

1809—1834.


Erroneous Impressions Dispelled—1809-1827, Birth and Boyhood—Early Efforts at Literary Composition—Employment as School Assistant—Religious Impressions—Vow of Consecration—Autobiographical Fragment—Life at Wymondley College—Mr. Lloyd's Reminiscences—1831, Invitation to Pastorate at Ware—Correspondence—Miss Holmes—Ordination—Marriage—Resignation of Ware Pastorate.

RATHER more than forty years ago an anonymous writer, sketching the characteristics of some of the more prominent "Reform" leaders of the time, referred to Mr. Miall in these terms: "From the strongly-marked and robust character of his writings we had taken the liberty of figuring to ourselves a personage of goodly presence, and of muscular grasp, when lo! the name of Edward Miall was responded to by a gentleman of middle height, but so slim and slender as to be almost transparent; a face which would have shamed the apothecary of Romeo! pale and studious, firmly compressed lips, and clear, dark

grey eyes, peering through a pair of smart-looking spectacles—in short, a meek, gentle, unobtrusive-like creature, and among the very last we should say likely to have been singled out as the intrepid and dauntless Editor of the *Nonconformist*."

The writer of the sketches referred to shared what was in all probability a popular misconception—at all events, many persons who had never read a dozen connected sentences of my father's writings, nor heard his voice, associated him in their minds with the noisy self-assertion of the mob-orator, and not for many years did anything like a just estimate of his work and motives prevail even with men who were not swayed by prejudice. There are, indeed, numbers who believe now that he had something of the fanatic and the demagogue in his nature, which became modified as his political experience widened ; that he adopted methods and cherished a spirit in his earlier years which his maturer judgment would have condemned. This, however, is far from being the case. An unsuspected power of sympathy and calmness of judgment were hidden beneath his most stirring denunciations of systematised wrong.

From his boyhood these traits were remarkable. The earliest family traditions relating to him which have been preserved, represent him at the age of sixteen or seventeen years as the one member of the family to whom the elder and younger members alike resorted for counsel and help.



His affectionate nature and helpful disposition thus drew him while quite a boy into unwonted responsibilities.

Edward was born at Portsmouth on May 8th, 1809, to Moses and Sarah Miall, his father being a general merchant in that town. While Edward was quite a lad the family removed to London, and his father established himself first at Hammersmith, and subsequently in a northern suburb, as a schoolmaster. For a short time Edward was a pupil at St. Saviour's Grammar School, but he could not have been more than sixteen years of age when he assisted his father in the management of his school; and it is well remembered how he distinguished himself in the direction of certain dramatic performances, chiefly Shakespearian, which were given at the establishment during the Christmas vacation. On these occasions he was stage-carpenter, scene-painter, and general director. His acquaintance with Shakespeare was certainly unusual in one so young, and his memory being very retentive he could repeat whole pages without tripping.

In 1827 it became necessary for the elder members of his father's family (a somewhat numerous one) to rely upon their own exertions for maintenance, and they accordingly dispersed. Edward engaged himself as an assistant first to a Mr. Saltmarsh, master of an academy at Bocking, near Braintree, and subsequently to Mr. Waddell, of Nayland, Suffolk, in both of which places he performed his duties creditably,

and won the esteem of those with whom he was associated.

The following extract from a letter written to one of his elder brothers belongs to this period of his life, and gives some indication alike of his literary tendency, and of the impartial estimate which he formed of his own achievements. Referring to various specimens of his composition which were lying before him, he says :—

“The first paper of importance contains upwards of a hundred lines or verses; they comprise the commencement of a collection of poems which I had already named *Tales of the Arabs*, and in this production I intended so to have out-Byroned Byron as to have astonished his most infatuated admirers. In fact, that poet’s fire and fluency were to be joined with the sweetness of Moore, the correctness of Pope, and the sublimity of Milton. I had already fixed with myself that Murray should give me 1,000*l.* for it, and after writing a dedication to the King, and composing a spirited preface, in which I disclaimed any feeling of dependence on the favour of the great, and every sort of fear for the whole host of reviewers, I commenced with great assiduity. I have already said that a hundred lines were already finished, nor did I for a moment doubt the superiority they possessed over every preceding poet of the kind. Unluckily, however, for the world, one evening, after I had been reciting my verses with much energy, I took up Byron and read his *Siege of Corinth*. Having sufficiently relaxed myself, I returned to my own verses. . . . I had so overgorged myself with the poetry of my rival that I felt but little appetite for my own verses, and accordingly I laid them down



and took up the newspaper. I had hardly cast my eye down one column before I discovered that the editor had expressed his opinion of the great want of a good sweeping satire. I immediately conceived that I was the person destined to wield the scourge."

The letter goes on to speak of other and less ambitious flights, including a set of minor poems, which were submitted to the criticism of the "candid friend" who "pointed out to him the general outline of one in Moore, the expressions of another in Kirke White, the similes of a third in Byron; in fact not one of them escaped as an original." This "*cacoëthes scribendi*," he writes, "generally attacks me once or twice in three years, and it is probable that nothing but ill-success will eventually cure me."

It was at about this time that permanent religious feelings were awakened in his mind. These were the subject of frequent communication with various members of the family, notably with his father and mother, his grandfather, Mr. George Rolph, a singularly pious and lovable old man, and with his brother, the then youthful pastor at Framlingham, the Rev. J. G. Miall. His grandfather's sympathy was very tender and sincere, and his exhortations were couched in evangelical phraseology, and reinforced by Scriptural quotations chosen with special reference to the youth's state of mind. His father, who died in 1829, wrote less frequently, but with great force and fidelity, directing his mind not only to religious considerations, but to practical duties,

and especially to the importance of making choice of his vocation in life. On the anniversary of Edward's eighteenth birthday, his father wrote a letter full of excellent parental advice, in which the following sentence occurs, which one may suppose was not without its effect in determining his course: "A vacillating and changeable disposition seldom produces excellency of any kind, and those only have arrived at superiority and distinction who have steadily followed one path, overcoming every difficulty by patience and resolution."

On the same day a vow of religious consecration was recorded by the lad, which was probably seen by no other eye than his own (unless it were that of his wife) until after his death. It is too significant to be omitted in a biographical record, though it need scarcely be remarked that both here and in the answers to "Ordination" questions at Ware, to which reference is made later on, the complexion of his theological belief indicates rather the point from which he set out than the conclusion to which his maturer thoughts conducted him:—

"By the blessing of God, and under his Divine assistance, I, Edward Miall, solemnly dedicate myself, soul and body, unto the Lord. May the Blessed Jesus, who has washed me in His blood, and sanctified me by His Holy Spirit, accept this dedication with that favour which He has promised to all who come unto Him, and may He grant that as often as I review this paper I may be incited to increased circumspection in my actions, renewed love and enlarged grace, and

unto His name shall be ascribed blessing and honour and glory and power world without end, Amen.

“Witness my signature,

“EDWARD MIALL.

“*Tuesday Morning, May 8th, 1827.*

“*Ætat 18 years.*”

Speaking, after a lapse of a few years, of this period of his life, he says (Ordination at Ware, December 1831):—

“I was a highly favoured subject of a pious education. My parents, of whom my father has since entered into his reward, instructed me in the great doctrines of evangelical truth. My theoretical acquaintance with religion was extended by reading, but I long remained a stranger to its transforming power. I saw and approved the good. I pursued the evil. A frequent alternation of sinning and repenting constituted the substance of my religious experience, and, as was inevitable, every instance of fruitless conviction left me more confirmed in sinful habits, and rendered me less susceptible of pious impressions, until, after repeated struggles of conscience, I might be said emphatically to be dead in trespasses and sin. Such was my state of mind when my brother now present (Rev. J. G. Miall of Bradford) was ordained in Suffolk. I was with him on that occasion. I well remember the feelings excited in my bosom by the case of one of the ministers then present. He was in peculiar distress of mind, and the circumstance affected me in two respects. I envied him his anguish, assured, as I felt, that the storm would eventually pass away, and leave behind it the peace that passeth understanding, and ascribing his visitation to his having, as I supposed, entered the

ministry from improper motives, I resolved that no inducement should prevail upon me to think of that office until I had some ground to hope that I was swayed by religious principle. Meanwhile, however, I took no step towards reformation. I continued to live without hope and without God in the world. Not long after, I was removed from home, removed from every restraint imposed upon me by the vigilance of anxious parents. Every religious check was thrown away, conscience sank into a state of torpor, an utter forgetfulness of God characterised my mind, and the kindness of Providence only preserved me from the grossest excesses of immorality. My Sabbaths were no longer employed in pious pursuits. Fond of reading, I selected my books without the slightest reference to the character of the day. But hardened as I was, there were some works which I could not peruse without compunction. I ventured one Sabbath upon a play of Foote's, in which religion and religious characters are assailed with all his ridicule. I was disgusted and shocked. I threw the book from me, with a determination to read nothing on the Sunday but evangelical works. During that very week, my mother sent me several. I selected from them Buck's *Christian Experience*, and read it attentively on the Sabbath following. There was nothing in it which struck me, but it produced a tone of seriousness and reflection. I fell into a fit of involuntary musing upon religious topics, in the midst of which, like an electric flash, my past ingratitude, my present degeneracy, my future prospects, shot across my mind. I instantly retired to my chamber, and wrestled with God in prayer. I entreated in agony of soul that this emotion might not prove transitory. I devoted every leisure moment to the hearty pursuit of God. My impressions were deepened, my desires increased. I will not detain

you, Sir, by a particular detail of feelings, common to all Christians at the period of conversion. A glow of love to the Redeemer pervaded my heart, and kindled within me a desire to spend my days in His service. I consulted my friends, who prudently recommended to me caution and delay. Time, so far from diminishing, increased my anxiety. I sought Divine direction, and I believe it to have been afforded me in the course of Providence. The result to me, the most important result, is the situation in which I now appear before you."

Towards the end of 1828, he was enabled by the kind introduction and cordial recommendation of the Rev. John Blackie to enter the Wymondley Theological Institution, a college founded for the purpose of training young men for the ministry in the Independent denomination. This institution, afterwards called Coward College, and subsequently merged in New College, London, was then situated near Stevenage in Hertfordshire, and was under the presidency of the Revs. T. Morell and W. Hull.

A fellow student and beloved friend through all the subsequent years of his life, Rev. David Lloyd, now of Bristol and formerly for many years pastor of the Congregational Church at Lymington, has furnished some interesting reminiscences of those early days. "He was," says Mr. Lloyd, "the best classical scholar of our year, if the meagre knowledge of Latin and Greek then in vogue may be dignified by that term. The course of study was the English language, history, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, ecclesi-

astical history, Christian evidences, authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, Biblical criticism, homiletics and systematic theology in all its branches." In addition to the regular course of study, however, Mr. Miall and his friend devoted two hours before breakfast all the year round, *i.e.* from 6 to 8 A.M., to the study of the following works: Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Middleton's *Cicero*, Locke *On the Understanding*, the writings of Reid, Dugald Stewart, and Dr. Brown, Sir J. Mackintosh's *Ethical Philosophy*, Butler's *Analogy*, Edwards *On the Will*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, &c., &c. All these were read with close attention, analyses of every chapter being afterwards written out. "In our subsequent intercourse," writes Mr. Lloyd, "Mr. Miall often referred to the work of these early hours, and never failed to say that it had had an important bearing on his character and intellectual labour in after life."

The power of extempore speaking, which was during the first half of Mr. Miall's public life so easy a passport to the intelligence of his auditors, he acquired, as so many who have won a wider reputation have done, by taking an active part in discussions of a "Debating Society." In the pulpit, too, which he occupied frequently during his college life, he was unconsciously preparing himself to wield that power which is purchased by no trick of oratory; a power which enabled him to penetrate at once to the hearts of his auditors through the medium of

clear, terse, incisive speech conveyed in earnest and sincere and even impassioned tones. He was at this time, there can be but little doubt, a youth of a deeply religious spirit. Mr. Lloyd's testimony, which well accords with that of others who knew him later on, says, "He was full of quiet humour, and sometimes indulged in sparkling wit and rasping criticism, but I can truly say that I never knew him lose his self-respect as a gentleman, or his consistent character as a Christian. He was most conscientious in observing his seasons of retirement for meditation and prayer. The Bible was daily read, and without ostentation he would often refer to his varying modes of religious experience. Through life this habit of daily Bible reading and private prayer was conscientiously maintained."

Before my father had completed his college term of five years he received an invitation to the pastorate of a small church of the Independent denomination at Ware, Herts. This was in February, 1831, in his twenty-second year. It will be seen by the following letters that after a few months' probation he decided to undertake the duties of the position offered to him.

*To MR. MIALL, from the CHURCH AT WARE.*

WARE, February 27, 1831.

DEAR SIR,—Being so much pleased, and we trust profited too, by your services in the second and third Sabbaths of this month, and observing with much satisfaction the impression made by them on the minds of all, we do *most cordially* and *unanimously* invite you to supply our pulpit for three

months, with a further view to your final settlement amongst us, as the pastor of the church and minister of the congregation.

Wishing you the guidance and blessing of the Great Head of the Church we subscribe ourselves in the name of the Church and on behalf of the congregation,

Yours with much affectionate esteem,

THOS. PAVITT.

C. BRUNTON.

*To the DEACONS of the INDEPENDENT CHURCH AT WARE.*

[*No date.*]

DEAR SIRS,—I received on the 27th February through the medium of my respected tutor, your invitation on behalf of the church and congregation at Ware to supply your pulpit for three months, with a view to my final settlement amongst you. I therefore embrace the present opportunity to communicate to you the result of my anxious deliberations upon a subject so vitally important. Most earnestly do I trust that the prayer expressed in your letter has been realised, and that I act under the guidance and blessing of the Great Head of the Church.

You have doubtless been made acquainted with my present situation. You are aware that the term generally allotted to our academical studies extends to five years, and that I have not yet reached to the termination of the third. Such being the case I am persuaded you will feel in common with myself, that an immediate compliance with your invitation would, all circumstances considered, be unjustifiable. Allow me therefore to propose that with the consent of the Church I will, if spared, commence my probationary labours amongst you on the first Sabbath in June, and in the meantime will supply your pulpit as frequently as the nature of my studies will permit. By this arrangement I shall be able



to comply with your request without greatly interrupting my preparatory course.

I am, dear Sirs,  
Yours with much respect and affection,  
EDWARD MIALL.

*To the TRUSTEES of WYMONDLEY THEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTION.*

*November, 1831.*

GENTLEMEN,—The final result of a series of events which have materially affected my future prospects, has made it my duty to address this letter to the patrons of my ministerial education. Sensible as I am that the course of conduct I feel it imperative upon me to pursue is a deviation from usual practice and an infraction of the ordinary rules of this house, I cannot but be conscious of the obligation which rests upon me to give you a full explanation of my motives. Indeed, were my duty in this respect less obvious than it is, my inclination would prompt me to express in a marked and emphatic manner my gratitude for the favours and patronage which I have enjoyed at your hands. I must be sensible that if I am in any degree fitted for the arduous and responsible office of the ministry, I owe it to you, gentlemen, the trustees of this Institution. Your kindness it was which placed at my disposal the means of acquiring knowledge, and supported me throughout the term of my preparation. Permit me, therefore, to express to you my cordial thanks, and to assure you that your past liberality heightens my regret that I cannot conscientiously remain until my period of study shall have expired.

The determination to which I have come may perhaps surprise you. Had it been predicted to me a few months since, I should have been possibly much more astonished than yourselves. The death of the Rev. Edward Edwards having left the Independent Church at Ware destitute of a pastor the deacons applied at Wymondley for supplies. In

turn with my fellow students I occasionally filled the pulpit. Upon a strong expression of the wishes of the people and sanction of my tutor I spent a considerable part of last vacation with them. I owe it to myself to state in justification of my conduct that the congregation during that time very sensibly increased. I have visited them since in connection with my fellow students, and more especially of late I have occupied their pulpit. An invitation perfectly unanimous and cordial has been presented me by the Church. I have hesitated, I have deliberated and prayed for direction. I have consulted my tutors, and such friends as I have in the ministry of the Gospel. My predilections, I can assure you, gentlemen, prompt me to remain where I am—my conscientious belief is that duty is opposed to them. There can be no alternative. I have decided upon an acceptance of the invitation, and I feel perfectly confident of your sanction and concurrence.

Once more, gentlemen, permit me to express my high sense of your kindness and patronage. I would not forget that I owe more to your liberality than any of those who have been associated with me. I was entirely supported by your bounty and freed from anxiety during my first year of study. May you long continue, gentlemen, to fulfil the important trust which devolves upon you, and may your reward be to witness a long succession of young men, educated under your superintendence, proving themselves enlightened, eminent, laborious, and successful ministers of the Gospel.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours very respectfully,

EDWARD MIALL.

REPLY to MR. MIALL.

GREAT ST. HELEN'S, LONDON,

*November 22, 1831.*

SIR,—I have received your letter, and will lay it before the trustees when we meet. You are probably aware that

Mr. Morell had previously written very fully on the subject of your leaving Wymondley. His letter was taken into very full consideration at a meeting which took place the end of last week, and the resolution which resulted from it was conveyed to Mr. Morell in a letter from myself. As an individual trustee I write without any authority, but I am not aware that there is anything in your letter that is calculated to alter the opinions of the trustees.

The trustees will no doubt receive your expressions of acknowledgment with satisfaction, but would receive them with still more if an adherence to the rules and regulations of the Institution had been the correspondent practice.

I am, Sir,  
Very truly your friend,  
J. A. GIBSON.

The ordination took place in November, 1831. It was his wish that his future wife, Miss Holmes, should be present at the ceremony. In the anticipation of his union with her and the enlargement, which, whenever he forecast the future, it seemed to promise him, he wrote to her on the eve of the ordination:—

“I think I shall see you before my ordination. But if not, let me deliver my unbiased sentiments upon the subject of your coming over on that day. I consider it to be a service scarcely less important to you than to myself. The feelings it is calculated to excite, and the impressions it is calculated to make, *ought* to be experienced by my companion through life. It is of moment that you should know my duty as well as I; that you should be witness to the vows I take upon myself, in order that you may constantly remind me of them, and stimulate me to accomplish them.”

He married immediately after his settlement the lady already referred to, Louisa Holmes, eldest daughter of Mr. Edward Holmes, of Clay Hill, near London, and niece of the Mr. Morell, the theological tutor of the college he had recently left. How nobly throughout a life entailing no ordinary amount of self-denial, the wife bore her part in cheering and sustaining her partner at home, when he was sorely beset by detractors and calumniators, no less than by obstacles of a more disabling kind, none know so well as those who in the home circle shared with him in her enduring love and solicitude.

Of the pastorate at Ware little or no record has been preserved. If he realised in any measure his own ideal, he was the means of "encouraging the timid and confirming the weak," and combined the "character of a preacher of the Gospel with that of a faithful and assiduous pastor," influencing his people "not less by conversation in private than by public instruction." That he did not enter upon an office of such "tremendous responsibility," as he then deemed it, without a keen consciousness of his own weakness and inadequacy to fulfil its obligations, nor without a firm reliance upon the help of Christ, is clear from his own references to the subject.

The stipulated income was 150*l.* a year, which afforded him a means of subsistence, "however scanty"; and when, after continuing at Ware for two years, he received a very pressing invitation to take the charge of a newly-formed congregation at

Gosport, he did not think that his straightened position was in itself a "good and solid reason" for removing to another and a wider sphere. So long as the legitimate influence of his office could be exercised, he was content to remain where he was. The stipend was, however, so small that he could ill afford to submit without complaint to the exceeding irregularity with which it was paid, and this circumstance, combined with another which is not clearly stated, but which appears to point rather to the opposition of an individual than a party, in connection with the management of the Sunday school, induced him to tender his resignation, after labouring assiduously and zealously for three years in the village. The cordial relations existing between the young pastor and his flock were fully sustained to the end, while in the case of a few, the sentiment of attachment remained but slightly diminished through the changes which occurred during the lapse of the succeeding fifty years.

## CHAPTER II.

### LEICESTER.

1834—1839.

Settlement at Leicester—Reforming Zeal—"Religious Liberty" Meetings—Extract from Sermon—Quotation from Biographic Sketch in the *Monthly Christian Spectator* of 1852—Sermon, "The Two Portraits"—Church Rates—Imprisonment of John Thorogood and William Baines—Anti-Church-Rate Meeting at Leicester—Aggressive Action against the Establishment contemplated, 1839—Resignation of Leicester Pastorate, 1840—Removal to London—Letter to Mrs. Miall.

It was not until my father was well "off with the old love" that he received a very cordial and unanimous invitation to minister to the Church and congregation worshipping at Bond Street Chapel, Leicester. His acceptance of that charge and consequent removal to Leicester, which took place in 1834, opened to him a wider sphere of labour, and brought him face to face with the most pressing political and ecclesiastical problems of the day. He was now only twenty-five years of age: a stripling in appearance as in years, but a man in the use of his mental faculties and in strength and stability of purpose. Here he laboured steadfastly and earnestly, devoting himself, under a full sense of the responsibility of his office, to the work of preaching and pastoral visitation.

The commencement of his ministry at Leicester

synchronised with an avowal originating with some Nottingham Dissenters (in the course of an interview with Earl Grey), that with nothing less than the separation of Church and State would they be content. This candid declaration was speedily ratified at "religious liberty" meetings held in the largest towns of England and Scotland. My father had for some five or six years past watched with keen interest the signs of the times, which indicated the development of liberal principles in ecclesiastical polity. Referring to this period half a century later he says—"I was one of those who rejoiced mightily, as a youth, in the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts—the commencement of a new era for the advancement of religious liberty." "Indeed," he adds, "my enthusiasm in after life took its origin in that event, and frequently and much as I have differed from Earl Russell, I retain until now most of the respect and veneration which I then felt for the noble lord."<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence of his having suffered such convictions, and the course of public conduct in which they resulted, to distract his mind in any degree from the duties of his office. His ardour was neither fitful nor contracted. The tasks which he undertook were the result of prayerful and prolonged consideration; they were also prosecuted with a steadfastness which could only admit of their being set aside for

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Chairman of 50th Anniversary of the Repeal of Corporation and Test Acts, 1878.

some higher achievement to which they pointed him. At one time (namely, in 1835) it seemed as if this fidelity to conviction and zeal for spiritual work would lead to his emigration to South Africa as a missionary. But he soon found that reforming zeal was as much needed to make straight paths for the Church at home as to pioneer her triumphs abroad.

As a preacher he exercised great power over his hearers; his clear logical method, his distinct and emphatic utterance, above all, his earnestness, compelled attention and won the assent of the heart as well as of the understanding. His sermons, for the most part, seem to have been written merely in outline, but some few have been preserved. One of these, preached in the ordinary course of his ministry, and published by request, may be appropriately quoted here. The following passage, interesting and impressive in itself, is doubly so to those who remember the history of that time, and the part that Leicester and its two principal Nonconformist preachers—Rev. J. P. Mursell (father of the Rev. Arthur Mursell) and Rev. E. Miall—subsequently took in the stirring events that followed. Preaching from the words “Among whom ye shine as lights in the world,” he says:—

“The superiority of example to precept is proverbial; and Christian example, I mean such as is worthy of the name, has been found in all ages of the Church, a most efficient means of diffusing the light of life. The world’s darkness, as we have before



observed, is a darkness chiefly of the heart. To allay prejudice and conciliate respect for the truth is no inconsiderable advantage gained. Exhibit the gospel in its loveliness, and the mind will more readily open to its purifying beams. And certainly when ungodly men behold it in its genuine effects; when they observe its lustre mildly shining forth through the Christian's conduct; when they recognise it in the meekness, the gentleness, the benevolence, the charity, the conscientious concern for the divine honour, of the sincere believer in Christ Jesus, their hatred to the gospel is assailed with no ordinary force. There is something in real religion which even the world cannot often contemplate unmoved. The man who in all his intercourse with society is noted as being honestly religious, firm to avow his principles, steadfast to maintain them, and gentle under all the obloquy he may thereby incur; the man who to real worth adds modesty, and with deep devotional feeling unites an unobtrusiveness of manner; who is not heard to cry, nor strive to vaunt his spiritual attainments or his nearness to God, but who calmly and unostentatiously is always in his place, whether in the closet or sanctuary; the man whose religious principles find development, not in noisy demonstration but in tenderness of heart, in care for the welfare of others, in patient endurance of wrong, in prompt forgiveness, in benevolence which suffers not the left hand to know what the right hand is doing; the man whose evident anxiety it is to be good and to do good, rather than to appear good—such a man—and there are such—does more to soften prejudice, and to conciliate for the gospel good-will and esteem, than any other means at the disposal of the Church. Why then is not greater good effected? Simply because such men are too few. Religion on the tongue, and the world in the heart; much outward

worship, and perpetual grasping at the treasures which perish ; many devotions, and ungovernable tempers ; Christians in name, Christians, perhaps, in fact, but mean and unamiable, or else timid and shrinking. It is these monstrous combinations, my dear brethren—this head of the woman and tail of the scorpion—it is inconsistencies such as these which fail in commanding the respect and the homage of an unbelieving world. Can we wonder that men deride or that the name of God is blasphemed on our account ? Is this answering the end of our calling ? Is this shining as lights in the world ? No ! Our example to be effective must be decided. The line of demarcation between our character and that of the unregenerate must be distinct, broad, palpable. Christianity to secure respect and influence must be exhibited in her own simple majesty—dress her in the garments of the world and she provokes contempt. To do good by our example, the world must see that our hearts are undivided. High sounding professions, when suspected of insincerity, are sure to injure the cause they were intended to serve.”

Further acquaintance with Leicester, and closer intimacy with his friend Mr. Mursell, the successor of Robert Hall, gave to his thoughts a more practical turn. A brief reference to his surroundings at this time occurs in an excellent biographic sketch in 1852. The writer says :—“ In and around Leicester was a  
“ large population of operatives, whose deep poverty,  
“ moral destitution, and political discontent, deepened  
“ within the young pastor’s mind the thoughts ex-  
“ cited by passing events. Five years of a Reform  
“ ministry had miserably failed to satisfy the expect-  
“ tation of those who had laboured most ardently for

“its establishment. . . . No section of the Liberal  
“party had such reason for discontent as the Dis-  
“senter; but after several threatening manifesta-  
“tions, and the concession of the Birth and Marriage  
“Registration Acts, they were fast settling down  
“into acquiescence. . . . But the keynote of a new  
“policy had been sounded. . . . It was this phase of  
“public affairs that particularly impressed the *con-*  
“*frères* at Leicester. Both by Mr. Miall and Mr.  
“Mursell, the State Church question in its relation  
“to New Testament Christianity, the actualities of  
“religion, the polity of nations, the nature of the  
“human mind itself, was deeply pondered. . . .  
“From the pulpits, the platforms, the press of the  
“town and country, in ordination sermons, and  
“newspaper articles, they put forth their views of  
“the principles and duties of Dissenters; and with  
“a degree of effect that soon gave to Leicester a  
“new reputation.”<sup>1</sup>

This conflict, however, was not to be a short one though it might be sufficiently severe. It demanded a courage and persistency in those who entered upon it which cannot well be over-estimated. To be calumniated by enemies, and shrunk from by uninformed or timid friends, was necessarily one of the first consequences of this militant attitude; but this produced greater cohesion and led to a more organised system of attack against the evils that were felt. Of these the State Church system was

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Christian Spectator* for 1852.

deemed the most intolerable and mischievous. Mr. Miall took occasion in 1838, on the ordination of his brother, the Rev. G. R. Miall at Ullesthorpe, a village near Leicester, to give utterance to the thoughts which were then burning in his mind on this subject. "The two Portraits, or Christianity and the Compulsory System Contrasted," was the title of this discourse, afterwards printed and widely circulated in the neighbouring town. No one could read this address without being profoundly impressed with the earnestness and the eloquence of the young preacher. Such words as these could not fail of their effect when thoughtfully pondered :—

"How does Christianity, as represented to us in the Scriptures, seek the accomplishment of her benign intentions? What means does she employ? Of what agency does she avail herself? What spirit does she breathe? Do her laws require or involve the use of compulsion on her behalf? Are her tones suggestive of the propriety of resorting to force? Has she a single principle, with which the calling in to her aid of the civil power can be made to sympathise? No! Her denunciations of final impenitence, it is true, are unsparing, but even by them she labours to persuade men. Her eternal judgments are severe and awful, but then they are pronounced in the accents of pity. She weeps while she condemns, and, to the last, yearns in compassion over infatuated sinners. But mark the ordinary tone of her application to the rebellious. What condescension! What benignity! What sweetness! What an accommodation of herself, so far at least as is consistent with her own holy purposes, to the weak-

nesses of human nature ! ‘To the Jew, she becomes a Jew, that she may gain the Jews ; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that she may gain them that are under the law ; to them that are without law, as without law, that she may gain them that are without law ; to the weak, she becomes as weak, that she may gain the weak—she is made all things to all men, that by all means she may save some.’ What chord in the human bosom, which can vibrate to the sympathetic touch, has not passed under her hands ? What image of tenderness, to which the heart usually does homage, has she failed to present ? Her invitations, mild as the dew which distils upon the new-mown grass, aim gently to insinuate themselves into the hardened soul. She asks with earnestness, she allures with all the skill of love, she beseeches with inimitable pathos. She cries not, not strives, nor lifts up her voice in the streets. The bruised reed she will not break, nor quench the smoking flax, until she brings forth judgment unto victory. Oh ! that ever the human heart should be so obdurate as to repel her gracious advances. But alas ! she is repelled. Then comes the compulsory system to her aid ; and the great men, the wise men, the captains of the earth, mingle with her soft and silvery tones the rude, uncouth, harsh, dissonant and barbarous sounds of their legal enactments. Pretending to sustain her authority, they violate the fundamental law in her code of morals, ‘Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.’ Their system scorns to ask support—it seizes it without ceremony. Ignorant of the rights of conscience, it profanely tramples them in the dust. Its appeals are made, not to the sympathies of men, but to the arm of magistracy. Its power ultimately resides, not in its own intrinsic charms, but in those darkest dens of bigotry and oppression, Ecclesiastical

Courts. It drowns the sweet voice of heavenly truth in the din of its own vociferous clamour for support. Its apparatus is all grinding and destructive. Its means and appliances all smell of the earth, earthy. Backed by this obtrusive and scowling champion, Christianity is compelled to bear the curse of the oppressed and the jeer of the infidel; is taunted as the child of priestcraft, and the deceiving mistress only of fools. Such are, have been, and ever will be the lamentable results of legislative intermeddling with religion.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1839 John Thorogood was committed to Chelmsford gaol, where he was immured for nearly two years for refusing to pay church-rates. In November, 1840, Mr. William Baines, of Leicester, a member of Mr. Miall's congregation, and a much beloved friend, was, for a similar refusal, committed to Leicester county gaol. Mr. Baines was one of twenty-seven parishioners of St. Martin's, Leicester, who disputed the legality of the rate levied upon them. He was selected for citation before the Court of Arches, but refusing on principle to recognise any ecclesiastical authority but that sanctioned by Scripture, he did not enter an appearance. The warrant ultimately issued was for contumacy in refusing to pay to William Fox and William Berridge, church-wardens of the parish, the sum of 2*l.* 5*s.* rated and assessed upon him, and for 125*l.* 3*s.* costs of the action. Leicester was thrown into a ferment of

<sup>1</sup> The designation “compulsory system” was more palpably applicable to the State Church than it became twenty years later.

excitement which the circumstances attending the seizure were not calculated to allay. Mrs. Baines was in a critical state of health, and her husband had to resort to subterfuge to escape from the house without giving any violent shock to her feelings. A meeting of the townspeople was held, convened by a society recently formed under the title of the "Leicester Voluntary Church Society," for the purpose of expressing sympathy with Mr. Baines, and of making a protest against this and other demonstrations of intolerance which had recently been made by the advocates of the State Church system. At this meeting Mr. Thorogood, who had been released from Chelmsford gaol at the moment of Mr. Baines's arrest, and who arrived in the town, accompanied by Mrs. Thorogood, a few hours before the meeting, was voted into the chair by acclamation. Mr. Miall was among the speakers, and struck the key-note with which a year later the readers of *The Nonconformist* became so familiar, and which was as a trumpet-call to the battle against State Churchism.

"I appeal," he says, "to the honest, the thinking, the manly Dissenters of this kingdom. What have you gained by your silence and inactivity? Not peace. For every petty officer of the State Church, emboldened by your apathy, ventures forth to insult you. Not a more kindly consideration of your claims, for no questions are treated by the Legislature with such haughty and supercilious derision as questions affecting the

interests of religious liberty. All parties agree in neglecting and oppressing you. No consideration is paid to your feelings. It is not deemed important to preserve ordinary decency in reference to your affairs. You are laughed at, you are despised, you are most gratuitously kicked by men of every political creed, by men of every order, by men in power and men out of power, by the poor curate whose parish is his kingdom, and by the lordly bishop who utters oracles from the bench. If peace then be your object, this is not the way to gain it. If you are seeking respect, you are utterly beside the mark. You shrunk from affording adequate countenance and support to Thorogood. Who has the honour now? Upon whom rests the respect of opponents? Upon you, or upon him? You have made one error, beware lest you make another."

Resolutions were passed tendering to Mr. Baines an expression of sympathy and admiration of his fortitude and "undaunted but unostentatious resolution," and appealing to Dissenters to arouse themselves from their inactivity and supineness, and to Churchmen to unite with the oppressed Dissenters in putting down for ever the vexatious and unjust impost of Church Rates. This was an incident only in the campaign against Church Establishments which was already projected by Mr. Miall and his friends. For more than a twelvemonth past they had been discussing the best means of stirring the heart of English Nonconformity, and awaking the moral sense of Dissenters in reference to the Anti-Christian character, as they deemed it, of the State Church



Establishment. Aggressive action in some form they were determined upon, and it became clear to them, as they considered the lamentable indifference and narrowness of view that characterised the principal organs of Dissent in the press, that nothing could be achieved in the direction of securing intelligent and coherent action, until the foundation principles of Nonconformity were consistently advocated through the newspaper press. Mr. Miall had freely contributed articles to the *Leicester Mercury*, and although at first there was no idea in his mind of undertaking the editorship of the journal to which their thoughts turned, he had already concluded that his life work was to be connected with the advocacy and dissemination of Free Church principles rather than with the pastorate, and in the autumn of 1839, rather more than a year before the circumstance just narrated occurred, he tendered his resignation to the Church, giving the following reasons for taking that step:—


“With the difficulties to which I have alluded, as lying in the way of my usefulness here, I cannot *altogether*, in the exercise of the strictest impartiality, charge myself. Some of them have doubtless arisen from the mode in which I have been accustomed to present to the minds of my hearers the truths of the Gospel. Some may be ascribed to the fact, that the plan of visiting my flock, which I adopted on mature reflection as the best, because the most likely to conduce to spiritual improvement, was not agreeable to the wishes and previous habits of many members of the Church. And, unquestionably, the devotion of so

considerable a proportion of my time and energies to great public objects excited dissatisfaction in the minds of some of my people. Nevertheless, I feel bound to declare my decided conviction, on the one hand, that the little disturbance of good feeling resulting from all these causes together, would not have amounted to a greater difficulty than ordinarily lies in the path of a minister, had it not been fostered and magnified by a spirit of partisanship—a spirit engendered by events over which I had no control, and for the occurrence of which I am not responsible; and, on the other, that but for the apparent claims upon my conscience presented by another and yet more extensive sphere of usefulness, I should not, probably, have deemed the difficulties of my present position a sufficient justification for tendering to you my resignation.

“But other claims *have* pressed, and with no little force, upon my conscience and my heart. The degraded position of the Church of Christ in these realms has for some years past been to me a matter of anxious concern. Her forced union with the powers of this world defaces her beauty, cripples her energy, misrepresents her character, and does dishonour unto her Lord. Christianity, God’s best and noblest gift to men, is converted into a mere political engine—or rather, that creature of the State which usurps the name of ‘the Apostolic Church of Christ,’ and which extensively promulgates ‘another gospel’ than that which the Apostles preached, whilst affecting to promote the great ends of Christianity, serves chiefly as a stepping stone to power and place, and is the subservient votary of Mammon. I believe that, in the eye of Christ, this connection between the Church and the State is adulterous and most offensive—that, impious in principle, it is, as might be anticipated, most deadly in its effects—that it is the prolific parent of bigotry, cruelty, rapacity and hypocrisy—a terrible scourge to the nation—a tremendous obstacle to the progress of divine truth.

"The present position of parties in reference to this great subject calls aloud for some decisive effort to bring this unholy alliance to a close. The Clergy of the Establishment, both evangelical and otherwise, are reviving the arrogant pretensions of the papal priesthood, and are very generally setting forth the doctrines of Popery under the garb of Protestantism. The dominant Church is daily becoming more bitter in its tone, more rapacious in its demands, more daring in the practices of persecution. It asks to have committed to its superintendence and control the education of our youth—it solicits a large increase of funds, already too ample, for the extension of its machinery. Meanwhile the Dissenters, regarded as a body, appear to be well nigh indifferent to the present humiliation of the Church, to view it with growing apathy, to look upon it almost without shame. Some efforts they have made to obtain for *themselves* a freedom from personal inconvenience, but about the enfranchisement of *religion* I cannot help believing them to be criminally careless.

"To bring about a change of view and feeling in reference to this subject, the periodical press appears, in the first instance, to be the most likely instrument. It is within our reach—it has never yet been fairly tried—it commands attention where treatises and volumes will be unheeded. Honestly and earnestly wielded, I believe its influence would prove most salutary and extensive. It would, I trust, open the way to more direct and serious and combined effort for the accomplishment of the Church's liberation. An opportunity seems unexpectedly to present itself to me of employing to this end, and through this medium, whatever talents I possess. Gladly would I see the post occupied by one better qualified than myself to ensure success. But I feel deeply impressed with the conviction that in all solemnity, and in a spirit of devout dependence upon God, *some one* ought to enter upon this work ; and although to do so efficiently, renders it necessary for me to quit the pastoral



office, I feel *that* to be no degradation whilst I aim to serve the universal Church. In the absence, therefore, at the present moment, of one in all respects qualified and at the same time willing to devote himself to this object, I am ready to offer myself—and have been induced to say to our Lord in reference to this errand ‘Here am I; send me.’”

The response was generous and sympathetic, but a request was made that he would not immediately and wholly break off his connection with the Church.

“We are quite aware,” wrote the deacons in the name of the Church, “that to enable you to carry out all your views will ultimately require all your time, and all your energies; but at present an experiment is to be made—a great work is rather to be prepared for than fully prosecuted; and during this process, it appears to us to be highly desirable and quite practicable, that for some few months to come our connection should continue; we being willing to send you forth to reconnoitre a wider sphere of labour—you being ready to return from it periodically—to attend to pastoral duties amongst us, to be present at the meetings of the Church, to conduct the services of each *first* Sabbath, and those of as many others as circumstances will permit; and in this position, a position we conceive quite in accordance with our character as a section of the universal Church, mutually to watch the indications which its great Head may vouchsafe for our guidance, and shape our course accordingly.”

This course was readily agreed to, and the final separation took place a year later when Mr. Miall removed to London to prepare for the task to which

in no light spirit he had resolved to commit himself.

The monotony of work at Leicester was agreeably broken by three or four vacation rambles in North Wales and Scotland, some record of which is left in letters to Mrs. Miall. I make selection of one only, there being nothing in the others, except the ordinary incidents of travel, which differs in kind from the latest.

*To his WIFE.*

INVERNESS, *July 7th*, 1839.

"It would seem as though on no former occasion of absence from home have I written or received fewer letters. Necessity partly, and partly accident, has prevented what would have been very pleasing to both of us, a freer interchange of thought and feeling. However, I have heard more than once or twice of your welfare, and you of mine. I know not how to express sufficient thankfulness for the uninterrupted pleasure we have been permitted to enjoy, especially in this last excursion with Mr. C——. The course of our rambles you will have heard from Mrs. C——. I propose to give you a faint but as faithful a description as I am able of Staffa and of Ben Nevis. We started for Staffa on Wednesday morning at five o'clock from Oban on board the *Helen Macgregor* steam-boat. The day was unusually fine. As soon as we got out of the bay, we looked behind us upon the coast we were leaving, and the scene presented was gorgeously sublime. A host of mountains about which the light clouds of morning floated, threw up a dark blue breastwork on the horizon, and amongst them Ben Cruachan stood, like Saul amongst his companions, a head and shoulders above the rest. The double peak ran up into



the clear sky as distinctly defined as the castle wall just before us, on the coast, and about the bosom of the gigantic mountain a broad mantle of cloud was thrown, the fleecy whiteness of which contrasted finely with the sombre hue of the Ben himself. This feature of the scenery held us in admiration till we had almost forgotten the other charms by which we were surrounded. Here a sleek and shining lighthouse perched upon some tongue of land that ran out into the sea half across the sound down which we sailed, and there was a worn and decayed castle standing on some bold headland, and trying to frown defiance as of yore on the scene below, while behind all, the high mountains of Morven on our right, and Mull on our left, closed up the view, and gave relief, magnificent relief, to every cottage within sight. Add to this a glorious sea, blue, glittering, and polished as a mirror, and you have some inadequate idea of the general character of a series of pictures shifting with every half hour's sail for sixty miles. Then came the broad expanse of sea, with the islands of Coll, Rum, Eig, Muck, and Skye within sight. We arrived at Staffa about twelve o'clock. The whole island, which may be about two miles and a half in circumference, stands out of the ocean supported upon immense ranges of basaltic columns, closely packed together. We landed at Fingal's Cave. Of this magnificent freak of nature I am unable to convey any description which will not rather look like a mockery. It runs back like an immense aisle of a cathedral 317 feet. Its roof is Gothic in form, fretted with the broken basalt and stalactite. Its sides, ranges of octagonal pillars closely blended in irregular lines. Its pavement, as we saw it, the green sea which clear as crystal, ran up in long swells to the very end. Nothing in mere detail looked more like the production of a human architect, nothing, regarded as a whole, more like that of a Divine one. We left the island with regret, and as we passed by the caves on our way to Iona, offered to the genius of the place a salute of cannon,

which was promptly responded to, in a double echo not inferior in clamour to the sound which awakened it. But I must hasten on. The whole day was rich beyond the power of words or colours to describe. I must pass over Thursday, and come to the ascent of Ben Nevis on Friday. Twice I have ascended Snowdon, three times Ben Lomond, but I knew little indeed of mountain climbing until I had reached the peak of Ben Nevis. We started about eleven in the forenoon—a party of four gentlemen—the obtrusive and bragging son of the landlady, and a boy guide. Our first half was mere labour, requiring time and perseverance. Our footing was good, soft mossy turf, and although the ascent was steep it was perfectly free from peril. From the basement to which we had now arrived, and upon which (2,000 feet at least above the sea) was a fine lake, there shot up almost precipitously at least 1800 feet a vast shoulder, the surface of which was covered with masses of broken rock, not fastened in the soil as at Ben Lomond, but merely held together by being interlinked one with the other. These would rock beneath the weight of the pedestrian, and often give way and roll down the mountain. Such was, with considerable diminution in point of steepness towards the summit, the nature of our path to the last, except where here and there we crossed broad meadows of deep snow. But the scene was awful. We stood above the clouds, we looked through their jagged crevices upon the mountains and lakes beyond them, and oh! the yawning precipice on the north-western side, sinking like the crater of a vast volcano 2,000 feet at least, not gradually but at once in a perpendicular line, made us shudder to look at it. Clouds hovered ever and anon between us and the base, the torrent formed by the melting snow sent up a perpetual moan. All was terrible, and even with a company of six, the solitude was most oppressive. We ascended in three hours and three-quarters, stayed on the summit three-quarters of an hour, and descended in two hours and ten

minutes. Dinner was ready at our return, which we attacked with hearty good will. I expect to be home on Friday night, though it is possible I shall not arrive until Saturday morning. We leave Inverness by mail to-morrow morning at half-past two for Dunkeld. Thence to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leicester. I long greatly to be home again, and was touched yesterday when I heard a blind fiddler play 'Home, sweet Home.' Kiss the dear children for me. Unite with me in praise to our heavenly Father for all His goodness. Accept, till my return, the undivided heart of your ever affectionate

"EDWARD."



## CHAPTER III.


### FOUNDING OF THE "NONCONFORMIST" NEWSPAPER.

1839—1841.

Review of circumstances leading to Mr. Miall's Journalistic Labours—  
Mr. Lloyd's Reminiscences continued, 1839—1841—*The Nonconformist* Newspaper Scheme—Editorship—Canvassing Tour—Letters to Mrs. Miall—To Mr. and Mrs. Baines.

THE friend and fellow student to whom reference was made in a former chapter was associated with Mr. Miall in some of his vacation rambles, and retains a vivid remembrance of his state of mind during the later years of his ministry at Leicester. In the summer of 1837 they visited Scotland, and had some intercourse with Dr. Wardlaw, the Rev. Greville Ewing, Rev. Dr. Heugh, and other uncompromising Scotch voluntaries. This intercourse was renewed not long after by a visit from Rev. Dr. Heugh and Dr. Harper of Leith to Leicester as a deputation from the Scotch Voluntary Association.

"Their eloquent appeals," said Mr. Lloyd, "made  
" a strong impression on Mr. Miall's mind, and  
" deepened his conviction of the unscriptural character  
" of all Church establishments. Indeed from that



“ time he looked at the question mainly in the light  
“ of the New Testament. Of course he deplored and  
“ denounced the personal, social, and public evils  
“ which sprang from the union of Church and State,  
“ but henceforth his strongest objection was founded  
“ on the fact that it contravened the spirit and  
“ teaching of Christianity. He was no longer per-  
“ mitted to pursue the quiet tenor of his way. He  
“ studied profoundly the great political and ecclesi-  
“ astical questions that were fermenting in society  
“ around him. . . . At first he shrank from the  
“ platform, but he used his pen in newspaper articles  
“ and tracts with potent effect. The Leicester ‘ Anti-  
“ Church-rate Society ’ was formed about this time,  
“ and many of its most trenchant publications were  
“ written by him. He now became one of the fore-  
“ most men of the town, and was preparing himself  
“ by intense thought and wide reading for the part  
“ he was to play in the future.”

The anomalous position of the State Church was becoming increasingly evident to all who watched public events, and in Leicester especially it was in 1839 a burning question. The establishment of a weekly newspaper in London, having for its aim the faithful and persistent exposition of the principles of civil and religious liberty, was determined upon. The selection of an editor seemed a matter of great difficulty. The name of a gentleman of great literary power and tried experience was suggested, and he was waited upon in London by Mr. Mursell

and Mr. Miall, who were appointed by their friends at Leicester as a deputation for that purpose. Their efforts failed, however, in this direction, and they set out on their return to Leicester with heavy hearts. At Rugby, as they paced the platform together, Mr. Mursell, suddenly facing his companion, said—"Miall, you must be the editor." "The words fell upon him," writes Mr. Lloyd, "like a thunderbolt. It had never crossed his mind. He said nothing. The two friends soon reached home, the one to spend the night in deep ponderings and many prayers, and the other to receive the ready acquiescence of his friends in the suggestion he had made. Soon afterwards Mr. Miall came to spend a few days with me at Harleston. He was in great perplexity. What was he to do? His increasing acceptance as a preacher, his growing attachment to his people, with every prospect of a happy and prosperous pastorate, why should he give up all this and throw himself and his young family on a most hazardous venture? Yet he confessed to a strange longing to be the expounder of truth and principle, which seemed to him to involve the glory of God and the well being of man. Mr. John Childs, of Bungay, spent a whole day with us. He had been consulted before, and was in full sympathy with the projected movement, and promised that his knowledge and experience as a printer and a man of business should be freely given. And

“ nobly did he redeem his promise. For in the “ preparatory steps and in the actual production of “ the *Nonconformist* Mr. Miall was especially assisted by Mr. Childs, Mr. Besley, and his friend “ Mr. Davis.”

The work of preparation devolved principally upon my father, and he addressed himself to it with an energy and determination that would not yield to any obstacle. His object was to raise from different parts of the country a sum of £5,000 in the form of £10 shares, each such share “ to be considered at present as a *bond fide* donation with this understanding, that the party giving it will be entitled, at any period he pleases, to convert it into a share.” (Letter to the Liverpool Voluntary Church Society.) In pursuance of this scheme he spent the greater part of seven months, viz. from August 1840, to March, 1841, visiting the towns of Manchester, Liverpool, Rochdale, Ashton, Bradford, Birmingham, Bristol, Ipswich, Colchester, and many others, in most of which he not only canvassed the few to whom he had introductions, but made a more general appeal to committees of voluntary associations and other bodies. The letters to his wife give some insight into the nature of the work and the spirit in which it was prosecuted. The task which lay immediately before him was irksome and uncongenial. Writing from Manchester (August 10th, 1840) he says :—

“ Thank you for your letter. You deserve a longer one than this will be to cheer you up in your desolation, although

to tell the truth you have the best of it. . . . One of the largest wholesale merchants<sup>1</sup> has taken me by the hand. I slept at his house, about six miles distant last night, after preaching in the village at his request. He is to introduce me to-morrow to some Independent minister at Manchester whose name is McKerrow, who is most hearty and energetic, and who, if he feels disposed to assist, can do great things there. The matter is being thoroughly talked about, and Mr. Watts will gather together, in some way or other, a number of the Manchester Dissenting 'nobs' that I may deal with them in a party. I shall not be able to report anything decisive until the end of the week. All that is now doing is preliminary."

The account of this visit is best told in Dr. McKerrow's own words, which were furnished to the writer by a correspondent at the time of Mr. Miall's death :—

"I am taken back," writes this gentleman, "thirty years ago to a conversation I then had with the late Dr. McKerrow. He said a pale, modest, diffident young man once called upon him from Leicester who was desirous of starting a newspaper in London, and who was visiting Manchester to obtain pecuniary aid for the purpose. He introduced him to Richard Cobden and John Bright. The doctor asked him who was to edit the new paper, and the young minister timidly replied that his Leicester friends thought he might do it. The doctor said to himself, Was there ever a more quixotic undertaking—this shrinking and obscure young minister going up to London to establish a paper as a rival to the *Patriot*, which has the confidence of the whole dissenting

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir James Watts.

community of the metropolis. He predicted for it a speedy failure. But its marvellous success profoundly impressed him with the calm patience and power and genius of that man." And he added, "There is now no public character in whom I have more confidence or for whom I have a higher admiration than Edward Miall."

From Birmingham a few weeks later, while recording some encouraging results, he confides to his wife the feeling of distaste which he has for the business in hand.

"At last I get aside for a moment or two to relieve a full heart by writing to you. Oh! the luxury, when far away from home, from wife and little ones, of indulging one's affection even on paper, and forgetting the anxieties which crowd upon the mind by day and by night, to enjoy the solace of communion with *Home*. Home! how dear to me after my wanderings will be the quiet and peace of home! Time rolls on, and will bring us to the end of this trying season of separation. Patience! we must be patient and persevering, and, I trust, the end will be good. . . . After all, this wandering may be useful. I trust I shall fully appreciate a quiet, quiet home. No more living upon society for me. My wife, my children, and my books shall be my solace from business. I'm weary of it—I loathe it, and long, with all freshness of feeling and heart, to seek peace in the bosom of my own family. Keep up your spirits, have faith, and wait in patience until the necessity ceases to exist of further separation."

Again, in Manchester, in October, he reports further progress. Dr. Halley and George Hadfield, M.P., are helping him, with his good friend John

Childs, of Bungay, and Dr. Thompson, of Coldstream. The Voluntary Church Society at Manchester, too, and the Friends of Religious Liberty at Rochdale heartily co-operate, but many hold aloof.

“My work,” he writes, “will undoubtedly be one of great difficulty. Ah me! I am not made to encounter the coldness, rudeness, taunts, and disappointments of a begging expedition. A little while longer—how long to me it will appear!—and I shall once again visit the more congenial precincts of the study. My spirits flag to-day; but I am in good health. Please write by return of post. Kiss the dear children for me.”

At Liverpool, which he visited during the same month, the leaders of Voluntaryism in the district, Revs. J. Kelly, Birrell, and others rendered efficient assistance, though what the precise measure of it was not stated.

“This erratic life,” he writes, “is certainly sufficiently miserable, but we have no right to complain. We have great difficulties to contend with; but this we had reason to expect. Let us both endeavour to bear our trials, that of separation among the rest, with cheerfulness. And that you may do so, I will give you an extract from a letter I received this morning from Mr. C——. He says: ‘Perhaps you may sometimes think even now of our ascent to the summit of Ben Nevis—always difficult, sometimes painful, occasionally perilous—but what a splendid elevation we attained! and what a delightful retrospect we had in the evening! And I trust, my dear friend, you will soon have to look down from that moral elevation to which you are climbing with an enviable satisfaction upon *past* trials and toils on the way to

it.' . . . It will not do for us to repine. All things are not as we could wish them to be; but then, all things are indicative of mercy."

From Lancaster and Leicester he writes :—

*Lancaster, October 26th, 1840.*—I arrived at this place, or rather at Oldcliffe Hall, about a mile from Lancaster, about seven o'clock last evening: not in the highest spirits possible, nor yet disposed to expect much enjoyment. I find, however, so much intelligence, so much attachment to principle, so much kindness of heart at Mr. D——'s, and withal so romantic a situation, delicious weather, and quiet retirement, as to have completely dissipated the gloom which gathered about my spirits on my way to Lancaster. I felt as though, after a tedious absence from those I love, I was getting further and further from home; as though I was prolonging almost indefinitely my wanderings from my own family; and I could not but feel most deeply that the work in which I am at present occupied will require even greater sacrifices. As I travelled, therefore, I mused in moody silence—my heart was "not" in the Highlands (but neither was it here)—the images of my wife and children passed before me in vivid remembrance; I heard their voices and prattle. . . . But, though it is sweet to dwell upon domestic enjoyments which I have left behind, and which I may anticipate yet again, I have recovered from the melancholy of last evening. There are children here with whom I can compare my own, who sit upon my knee and talk of papa. There is mamma, who is as free and friendly as mammas ought to be after having eight in family. There are glorious pleasure-grounds, the bay, the castle, the mountains—all visible from the terrace on which the Hall stands; and, I trust, there is some prospect of serving the cause for which I came hither. So I make myself as content without a pipe and family as possible, and solace myself by writing to you.



I am to preach at the chapel this evening, and, as I wrote to you a day or two since, I might, were I disposed, excuse myself from repeating the engagement this afternoon; but the truth is, I have been craving for my writing materials as for food and drink, and to set down my thoughts, even though I have nothing new to communicate to you, is a pleasure I am not disposed to forego.

Mr. D—— (and indeed several most intelligent laymen whom I have met with on my travels) perfectly coincide with my movements, sympathise with me in feeling, clearly see the necessity for my present work, and, above all, reprobate that ministerial timidity and unfaithfulness which has rendered such a work necessary. Mr. Kelly, also of Liverpool, agreed with me on this head. All advise me to keep myself clear from London society; all regard that as the greatest peril I shall have to encounter; and pretty generally I am cheered on by confident predictions of success. So that the first great difficulty being overcome, I have no great misgiving for the rest. And depend upon it I will ring a peal in the ears of drowsy Dissenters, such as will startle the blood into their cheeks for very shame. When the trumpet is once up to my mouth I will not spare. . . .

LEICESTER, *November 7, 1840.*— . . . . I find I shall not have to journey to the west, Mr. Mursell being engaged to take Birmingham and Bristol, with the neighbourhood, between this and Christmas. It is just possible that I may come to London next week, but that will depend upon whether our business promises to be forwarded more by my doing so than by starting immediately for my eastern journey. . . .

I am afraid we shall be unable to come out before February. *Friends* at Leicester are the same; many *professed* friends have gone clean against me. The most scandalous reports are circulated of me here, as usual. That the *Noncon.* is all a sham; that I mean to come back to Leicester; that my

goods are all distributed about the town—not removed out of it—ready for me when I settle down again. I snap my fingers at the whole of them, and am only thankful to be delivered out of the clutches of so unprincipled, and hollow, and malignant a set. . . .

It was during this month that the imprisonment of Mr. Baines, narrated in the preceding chapter, occurred. The following letter, written during his absence from home, indicates that Mr. Miall's anxieties were not wholly confined to the issue of his canvassing expedition. It is inscribed outside to

MR. WILLIAM BAINES,

*In whose person truth and religious  
liberty are outraged by an ecclesiastical  
authority which emphatically calling itself  
"Christian" originated in the darkest days  
of Popery and now constitutes the strongest  
mark of Antichrist.*

COUNTY GAOL,  
LEICESTER.

*To my dear and valued friends MR. and MRS. BAINES, the  
former of whom is now a prisoner in Leicester County  
Gaol for conscience' sake.*

MY MUCH-LOVED FRIENDS,—Although I no longer stand to you in the formal relation of pastor, I esteem it no less a duty than a privilege to offer you my sincere condolence on the recent trial of your faith, and to minister to you, according to my ability, suitable consolation. I had indeed fondly hoped that your separation from each other would ere now have been terminated by the judicial decision of that court to whom is committed for protection the liberty of every British subject. Looking at the loose and unsatisfactory character of the judgment as delivered by Lord

Denman, I am compelled to lament that ecclesiastical oppression finds its abettors not merely in the petty officers of the Church, but in the occupants of the bench of justice itself. The poison of the system which you nobly and devotedly refuse to recognise has polluted the very fount of both law and equity.

Allow me, my dear friends, to congratulate you on the cause of your present suffering. The Master whom we serve has said, "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you," &c. Many noble spirits have trodden before you the thorny road, and the very briars which tore their flesh they wove into a garland of glory to place upon their brows. To you is granted the high honour, not merely of professing principles of truth, but also of suffering for them. A struggle is now going forward to overthrow and crush religious liberty in your person. You stand forth, or rather you have been called forth, as the representative of the rights of conscience in this kingdom; to you it is committed to do battle for the establishment of the voluntary principle—a principle identified with the honour and progress of pure Christianity. 'Tis a noble, 'tis an arduous, 'tis an awfully responsible post. Your conduct may be, and in all probability will be, the pivot on which the whole question will turn. The eyes of myriads are upon you—of friends and of foes. You suffer; but every suffering you meekly, patiently, and, I may add, cheerfully endure, is contributing to the final triumph of the great cause which you have at heart. Happily your enemies can touch you only in that which is external and perishable; your character is above their reach; your principles they cannot injure; your reward they only serve to augment. You have committed yourselves to a great and glorious cause. Lash yourselves on to it, confiding in its buoyancy, and, let it bear you where it will, there is no billow over which you will not securely ride. There is a certainty that sooner or later you will be borne to solid ground—to lasting triumph.

You are now no longer your own ; by peculiar circumstances, by a marked and special Providence, you have been publicly espoused to the cause of truth and of God. Your constancy, firmness, and faith will constitute a rich blessing to the Church Universal. Should they give way, religion will feel the shock as well as you. But I rejoice that you stand not alone. More is He that is with you than all that are against you. He knows how to succour in the most trying hour. He has given you proof of this. He has opened to you mercifully the highest sources of consolation. He has taught you to lean upon His arm. He has bound you to Himself by kindnesses displayed above all you could ask or think. You have asked strength at His hands, and strength has hitherto been vouchsafed. Act only for Him and He will never forsake you. Exalt Him and He will promote you.

Adieu, my beloved friends, for the present. God bless you and comfort you ; give you grace to endure, make your trials subservient to His own honour, and speedily give you an honourable and triumphant issue out of them !

I am, my dear friends,

Yours most affectionately,

And with high admiration of your virtues,

EDWARD MIALL.

Mr. Baines's continued incarceration was a great trouble to my father ; his thoughts incessantly turned to him. His image rose up before him as he lay on his bed at night as that of a prisoner, "yet a prisoner for truth's sake." As month after month passed by, and still no order for release came, my father's longing to enter upon his new work grew more and more impatient. He wrote at frequent intervals to his friend letters full of encouragement,

of consolation, and of affectionate sympathy. A week or two before the appearance of the first number of the *Nonconformist*, stung by the apathy of the London Dissenters in reference to the State Church question, and in particular to their absolute indifference to this matter of Mr. Baines's imprisonment, he writes to him :—

“The *Nonconformist* will, I trust, soon set your case before the world, that men shall no longer be excused for misunderstanding it. I hear you have made application to the London [Dissenting] Ministers. I fear they will desert you. Let me know their answer; for I intend to put you forward in our first number. Ministerial authority has no terrors for me. I have been behind the scenes, and know that their thunder and lightning is nothing more than sheet copper and powdered resin. I hope they mean to act wisely; for if they do not, as surely as they live I shall lift the curtain to the public and show the trick. Get Thomas Carlyle's *Lectures on Heroes* and read—especially those on Luther and Cromwell—it will brace your mind like spring-water.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE "NONCONFORMIST" NEWSPAPER (*continued*).

1841—1842.

First Number issued April 14th, 1841—Introductory Address—Characteristics of Leading Articles—1842: Progress Reviewed—Life at Home—Stoke Newington—Another Autobiographical Fragment—Extracts from Early Articles.

THE first number of the *Nonconformist* was published on the 14th April, 1841. It made its appearance in stirring times. The injustice and folly of upholding an establishment of religion by State enactment was rudely demonstrated by the numerous distrainments made in various parts of the country for non-payment of Church-rates, and, as indicated in the last chapter, by the continued imprisonment of Mr. William Baines in Leicester County Gaol, which was chronicled week after week in a leading paragraph of the *Nonconformist* until his release at the latter end of June.

The editor's introductory address to his readers was wholly different, both in form and in spirit, from the modern editorial salutation. In the first article Dissenters are thus rallied on their past inaction: "Dissenters, as a body, have uniformly acted as

though they were ashamed of their great leading principle, and secretly distrustful of its efficacy ; and they have wasted their efforts in a series of petty skirmishes, which have served only to win for them more comfortable quarters, without bringing them a whit nearer to the attainment of their ultimate object." "For their principles Dissenters have hitherto gained nothing ; for themselves they have only reaped contempt." "Before Dissenters can hope to make way, they must make the basis of their operations national rather than sectarian—must aim not so much to right themselves as to right Christianity."

"The primary object of the *Nonconformist*," continues the editor, "is to show that a national establishment of religion is essentially vicious in its constitution, philosophically, politically, and religiously ; to bring under public notice the innumerable evils of which it is the parent ; to arouse men, and more especially those who, avowedly and on religious grounds, repudiate it, from the fatal apathy with which they regard its continuance and extension ; to ply them with every motive which ought to prevail upon them to come forward and combine and act for an equitable and peaceable severance of Church and State—this is the great design of the projectors of this paper. They have no other object, pecuniary or party, to serve." As to domestic politics, "we ask nothing more from the State than *protection*, extending to the life and liberty, th

peace and property of the governed ; and to secure this to all classes of subjects, we advocate a fair and full representation of all."

The editor attacked aristocratic government and class legislation with almost as much vehemence as he did that system which was to him the world's counterfeit of Christianity—a State establishment of religion. "All the parts of the political system" appeared to be "in an unnatural state of dislocation." The administration of the law had fallen into general and deserved contempt. The people might be silent, but their silence was "big with lessons of deep and solemn meaning." "Will our Ministers," writes the editor in this first number, "and representatives never see till too late that a silent people is not necessarily a consenting people or an indifferent people? that often when most quiet they only BIDE THEIR TIME?"


He was opposed to the Melbourne Administration, albeit Lord John Russell held office under it, because the Whig Ministers repeatedly disappointed the hopes of their best friends ; with high-sounding protestations they failed altogether even to attempt the removal of burdens which they saw and acknowledged. To the Tories and the main object of their policy, the perpetuation of monopoly, he offered unmeasured opposition. "An increasing expenditure and a declining revenue, hunger for bread amongst the masses, Ireland on the verge of rebellion and foreign affairs in derangement, popular discon-



tent, commercial embarrassment, intestine party divisions, anti-poor-law pledges that were never meant to be redeemed, furious Protestantism that cannot be soothed into subordination, a frowning court, a discontented people." Such was the state of affairs in 1841, a condition that rendered it a matter of very little moment who was in power or who in opposition. "The question," wrote Mr. Miall, "is no longer one of party. With more than half of our population it is one of life or death."

The arrangement of the leading articles in the *Nonconformist* which was followed throughout the whole period of nearly forty years during which Mr. Miall was the responsible editor, gave precedence to ecclesiastical affairs, but although this served to signalise the most essential characteristic of the paper, the political topics of the day, both foreign and domestic, made a larger demand upon the mental energies of the editor than the former. During the first few years, the principal articles under the first division took the form of essays upon various aspects of the State Church question, and these were subsequently reprinted.<sup>1</sup> They extended over a period of four years giving to the early volumes of the paper a character all their own. The original articles and the selection of matter throughout, told unmistakably of one mind and one governing purpose. The style was bold but courteous, stirring but not

<sup>1</sup> *The Nonconformist Sketch-Book ; Views of the Voluntary Principle ; Ethics of Nonconformity, &c.*



declamatory, often closely argumentative but never dull. At the end of the first year, the circulation had risen from a few hundreds to two thousand, and already there were unmistakable signs that the directness of purpose, the enthusiasm, and sustained hopefulness which animated the editor, had been communicated to a large class of intelligent people in almost all parts of the country. That much maligned being the "Political Dissenter" was already "abroad," and thenceforth cohesion for purposes of ecclesiastical and political reform became more and more effective. In his prefatory "Address to the Readers" at the commencement of 1842 the editor writes: "On the fourteenth of April last  
" this paper started on its career. To the ordinary  
" difficulties which new publications have to en-  
" counter, were superadded those arising out of  
" wide-spread indifference to the main object of its  
" establishment, and cherished suspicion of the  
" motives by which its best friends were actuated.  
" It rose in clouds. It had the sanction of no  
" influential party. By the leading men of that large  
" body whose ecclesiastical principles it proposed  
" to advocate, it was frowned upon as intrusive.  
" The authorities were clearly against it. All  
" mention of it was studiously avoided in those  
" periodical publications which Dissenters are wont  
" to consult. Alone and unbefriended, save by a  
" warm-hearted few, it set out upon its course. It  
" flattered no class. It gave way to no prejudices.

“ It shrank not from the avowal of principles which  
“ the cant of the day had branded with an odious  
“ name. It steadily followed truth, indifferent as to  
“ whose path it was called to cross. Against that  
“ species of shuffling which goes by the name of  
“ expediency it set its face from the first; and its  
“ one rule has been to utter, not what its readers  
“ might wish but what they ought to hear.” The  
prophet found honour, however, elsewhere than in  
his own house and country. “ It would ill become  
“ us to pass by without thanks the newspaper press,  
“ whether metropolitan or provincial. The unsolicited  
“ liberality with which they have given selections  
“ from our articles a place in their columns, and the  
“ disinterested expression of their respect and appro-  
“ bation, have conduced in no small degree to place  
“ us in our present triumphant position. They are  
“ worthy of double honour in this matter inasmuch  
“ as our plan precludes the possibility of our making  
“ them any effectual return. Their courtesy stands  
“ in marked contrast with that portion of the  
“ monthly press which professes to be identified with  
“ the cause we have sought to advance. Liberal  
“ papers of all shades of opinion have quoted the  
“ *Nonconformist* without reserve—dissenting period-  
“ icals, almost without exception, have suppressed  
“ even our very name.” A year later the editor  
speaks of continued encouragement and success. He  
believes that the paper “ exercises a control over a  
considerable and increasing section of political society,

more potent and decided than its most ardent friends are disposed to imagine." Gratifying as this is it is "nothing more than homage due to soundness of principles, and to truthfulness of spirit, and it is our earnest desire that none of them may solace us in our labours, without, at the same time, quickening our sense of responsibility."

My father was living at this time at Stoke Newington. It must have been the happiest time of his life. After a successful canvass of the dissenting communities in the districts enumerated in the preceding chapter, he had returned to realise his anticipation of being in his study at regular work, constantly employed, and having around him for his solace from business his wife, his children, and his books. Alert, both in mind and body, he rose usually at five in the morning during the early part of his career as a journalist, lit his fire, made his own coffee, and despatched three hours' work before joining his family at breakfast. For three years, two or three days weekly, he walked to and from Stoke Newington Common to his office in Whitefriars Street. It was of this period that he spoke some eight years subsequently at a numerous meeting of his political friends held at the London Tavern.

"I am not ashamed to confess," he said, "that in the preparation of the *Nonconformist*—more especially in the conduct of it during the earlier part of its course—I took pains, pains to inquire, pains to express myself, pains to get at the hearts

of those with whom I came in contact, pains to make known and to commend to all my readers the thorough honesty of my intentions. For three or four years after I had embarked upon the experiment, I may truly say that the *Nonconformist* was scarcely ever out of my thoughts, whether awake or asleep. I had it before me by day—I dreamed of it by night. I had no sooner sent forth one number, than I had my thoughts busy upon the one to follow. I looked abroad and around me, upon every object that could interest the mind, in order that I might have materials for variety, for illustration, for argument, or for appeal. I may truly say, that it was the one purpose of my life, the single idea that haunted me during that period; and I believe that this has been the secret, to a great extent, of the moral influence which it has attained. No man can be earnest, even in wrong, without communicating the contagion of his earnestness to those to whom he speaks. I feel grateful now for the opposition which I encountered at the commencement of my career. I am delighted at the discipline through which Providence saw fit that I should pass; and I earnestly trust that I may turn to account all those great lessons that have been impressed upon my own mind in consequence of the position which I was obliged to take up."

In addition to this regular work he preached frequently on Sunday, and directed personally the education of the elder children. The writer from whom we have previously quoted<sup>1</sup> "vividly remembers his stroll over the expanse of fields at Highbury—now covered with streets of villas—to Stoke Newington once a week, to act the privileged part

<sup>1</sup> P. 23 *ante*.



of amanuensis to Mr. Miall." The same writer also speaks thus of his first glimpse of him which must have been at this period of his life:—

"The writer has himself a vivid recollection, at  
"the distance of some ten years, of the feelings with  
"which he went to hear the editor of the *Noncon-*  
"formist on a Sunday evening from a suburban  
"pulpit, of the incredulous surprise with which he  
"beheld, instead of the loud-mouthed, fiery-tongued  
"orator he had expected, a gentleman of the neatest  
"person and quietest demeanour, reading a profound  
"and beautiful composition on the words from which  
"so many have declaimed pompous platitudes, 'God  
"is love.' The constant perusal of the preacher's  
"writings must infallibly convey the impression that  
"the writer has thought out, with painstaking  
"thoroughness, every sentiment he utters, that the  
"method of his saying it is at once natural and  
"deliberate, that a profound sense of responsibility  
"to God, and a tender regard for the best interests  
"of man, are directing and controlling his pen.  
"Personal contact with the man would confirm this  
"idea of the writer. 'I dislike political associations  
"for young men,' said an eminent London minister  
"to one of his disciples; 'but I can trust you with  
"Edward Miall, for I know he is a devout man.'"<sup>1</sup>

No representation of the general tenor and aim of Mr. Miall's life would be complete without some account of his contributions to the paper, such of

<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Christian Spectator* for 1852.

them at all events as were written in exposition of the distinctive principles with which he had identified his name, for "they and we," he said, "are essentially one." "Were we to abandon them we should tear up by the roots our own happiness." The following selection of extracts will convey to the minds of those who are unfamiliar with the early history of the *Nonconformist* a more correct impression of the character of the writings than any analysis or description of them<sup>1</sup>:—

DISSENTING MINISTERS AND THE STATE CHURCH.—We solemnly arraign the body of Dissenting ministers in England at the bar of truth. The time for trifling has gone by. The Establishment, a life-destroying upas, deeply rooted in our soil, undisturbed, drinks up fresh vigour. It sprouts again. It puts forth fresh branches. It sheds its noxious seeds in our colonies. If there be evil in it, that evil is daily becoming confirmed, augmented, perpetuated. The curse is going down to our posterity, abroad to our emigrants, aggravated in its intensity. For our part, we are resolved to wash our hands of the guilt. In the name of myriads, victims of an impious pretence—when they lean upon it, fatally deluded, when they discern its hollowness, rendered infidels for life—in the name of unborn generations, of the untold millions that shall one day populate the distant dependencies of Britain—in the name of Christianity, misrepresented, disgraced, downcast, trodden underfoot, by aristocratic legislation—we charge the body of Dissenting ministers with unfaithfulness to sacred principles, evasion of a noble mission, and *seeming* recklessness of all the mighty interests at issue.

\* \* \* \* \*

A State Church! Have they never pondered on the

<sup>1</sup> The short pithy, headings to the articles gave them additional pungency. This is lost in the "sampling" plan which I have adopted.

practical meaning of that word? Have they never looked into that dark, polluted, inner chamber of which it is the door? Have they never caught a glimpse of the loathsome things that live, and crawl, and gender there? Did they never hear of simony—light-hating simony, too hideous of form for the day to look upon—burrowing and nestling within that same State Church? Has patronage never come across their path, to make them start and pause, and look at its disgusting features? Did no one instance, out of those daily occurring, of advertising the sale of next presentations, ever happen to meet their eye? Or, to get away from details, has their thought never rested upon the fact that their own liberty to worship God as He has commanded them, is graciously *allowed* them, *permitted* as a necessary evil, an infraction of the rule which places the interests of a great and intelligent people in the hands of the Cardigans and Waterfords, the Palmerstons and Sibthorpes, the soldiers and the lawyers, the gamesters, duellists, and blacklegs of the upper and lower Houses of Parliament? In the face of this monstrous absurdity and impiety, what have they done? We repeat the question with emphasis, “What have Dissenting ministers done?”

\* \* \* \* \*

The leading men in our congregations, Churchmen too often in their sympathies, Dissenters only in their professions and connections—these are the men that stand between us and the sun. Had Dissenting ministers declared themselves, and sworn upon the altar of truth and duty that they would never rest until the abomination was swept away, these would no doubt in crowds have gone over to the Church—the most fitting refuge for wealthy worldliness. The seeming loss, however, would have been real gain. The Dissenting body might have shrunk in dimensions, but it would have become sounder at heart. Its thews and sinews would have been only the more vigorous for having been relieved of redundant fat.



Cheerfully, and with our whole heart, we offer our tribute of respect and admiration to the zeal, the energy, the perseverance, the success, with which their labours in this direction are performed. We not only admit, but we are proud to proclaim our conviction, that the body of Dissenting ministers is about the most valuable, the most useful, which our country can boast of; for the most part, good men, able expositors of Scripture, attentive pastors, true philanthropists. Scantly paid, they are content with frugal fare, and strive, by self-denial, not only to "owe no man anything," but out of their narrow incomes to set their flocks an example of liberality. No body of men, despite all the charges brought against them by sectarianism, more habitually exercise Christian charity. No men more cordially rejoice when good is done by the instrumentality of any sect. Whatever there is in this kingdom of active benevolence, of high-toned morality, of Christian virtue, is mainly to be traced to their unostentatious labours. We have no end to answer in offering them this sincere token of our respect. We would not stoop to flatter them. We are not about to retract one iota of the charge we brought against them. We speak thus because thus we think and believe.

THE ESTABLISHMENT A COUNTERFEIT CHURCH.—An image carved with marvellous cunning, tricked out in solemn vestments, a part woven by human fancy, a part stolen from the chest of truth—an image, we repeat, an outside semblance, a counterfeit of life, not God-created, but made by the hands of man, empty, without heart, destitute of any well-spring of vitality—has been placed by aristocratic legislation in the throne of Christianity. The living, simple beauteous truth, the rightful queen to whom all spiritual homage of due belongs, too sincere, too earnest, too unbending for the purposes of men in power, was long since deposed, thrust out, compelled to wander in obscurity and to witness the fealty of her voluntary adherents treated as an offence against the good order of society. Great men—kings, nobles, bishops—stand round about the image their own sagacity has

fashioned, bow to it and pay it court, proclaim it the only Church of Christ, pass laws professedly to maintain its state, and share the proceeds among themselves. All men are bid to acknowledge it, in humble thankfulness that they are permitted to hold any conversation at all with her whose throne is usurped by this creature of the State. Meanwhile, these great ones, under the sanction and on the behalf of their Church, perpetrate a thousand enormities, violate every maxim of religion, degrade, insult, harass, imprison—regard nor justice nor mercy in their pursuit of pelf, until half this nation, disgusted with the imposture and ignorance of the claims and worth of heavenly truth, declare that there is no such thing, that it is all a hollow pretence, and that Christianity itself is a scheme of priestcraft.

Christianity! What kind of Christianity is our State Church upheld to subserve? An attention to rites for the performance of which fees may be exacted; heartless formality; a blind, unreasoning, ignorant, superstitious obedience to the priesthood; payment of tithes, and Easter offerings, and church rates—these are the great objects of our Establishment. The interest taken in it by our rulers is just an interest in property. What concern can the vast majority of them be supposed to feel for the spread of religion? The whole thing is a stupendous money-scheme carried on under false pretences; a bundle of vested rights, stamped for the greater security with the sacred name of Christianity; an affair of livings, and benefices, and baronial bishoprics to the aggregate amount of 5,000,000*l.* a year.

To shatter this image, and give the dust of it to the four winds of heaven, to re-conduct Christianity to her throne, to vindicate her rights, to restore her legitimate influence, is the sacred mission of Protestant Dissenting ministers.<sup>1</sup> They are appointed by Providence to this great work; their

<sup>1</sup> This sentence was revived by clerical Church-defenders some five-and-twenty years later as an illustration of Mr. Miall's hostility to the Anglican Church; the fact of his words being directed against the State connection being, perhaps sometimes unwittingly, overlooked.

principles open up to them this glorious career; they are equal to the mighty undertaking; the time is come for them to decide and act. With earnest longings of heart, with trembling solicitude largely intermingled with hope, we wait, the country waits, to hear their determination. We entreat them by all that is good and great to come forward. Let them but say "The work shall be done," and the doom of the Establishment is pronounced.

\* \* \* \* \*

DISESTABLISHMENT FORETOLD.—Priestcraft must fall. That truth is written in light. With them it remains to decide whether it shall fall by the hands of religion or of infidelity—whether they will ride and control, or perish in the storm.

\* \* \* \* \*

That a serious and determined attempt to force this barrier will be attempted with much inconvenience, with an immediate desertion from our ranks, possibly with some loss of civil advantages, it were vain to deny. But until, for the truth's sake, we are prepared to welcome sacrifice, we are unfitted for the work.

We know not what Christianity is worth, if its emancipation be not worth all the suffering it may require from us. Equally ignoble and vain is the plea that time will accomplish the momentous change. Time will not accomplish it. Men will.

Men—either men of violence who know the truth only as distorted and disfigured by a State Church—or men of a hardier, more sincere, less calculating religion than that which we possess. But since the work must be done, and trials must be endured, why not now? Why not by us? Let these questions be answered to the satisfaction of our conscience and we will cease our labours.

\* \* \* \* \*

DISENDOWMENT NOT SPOLIATION.—. . . A remark or two in explanation of these general statements will place our

meaning in a clearer light. We shall not be guilty of the absurdity of submitting in this place a detailed plan for effecting the object, but we may properly indicate two or three leading principles, which in our judgment any plan ought to include.

A prominent idea involved in the separation of Church and State is the resumption by the latter, for civil purposes, of all national funds at present appropriated to the former. We take it for granted that Church property is, in the fullest sense of the term, national property. From the Reformation downwards Parliament has so dealt with it. The power that handed over in trust to the Anglican Church her present temporalities can surely resume them, whenever it is believed that their present application is detrimental to the best interests of the empire.

We are no advocates, however, for spoliation. Public good is never in the long run promoted by private injustice. Rights have grown up under the present system which must be respected—vested interests, which, whatever face of absurdity or even impiety they present to us, must not be disturbed without equitable compensation. The establishment is a national institution; it is not a thing connived at simply, or tacitly sanctioned, as was slavery; it was created, and it is at present upheld by law. Every legal right, therefore, which under this system has become property, has, upon its abolition, a reasonable claim upon the State for a fair equivalent.

\* \* \* \* \*

We trust, then, we have explained the object we have in view beyond the possibility of any but wilful misapprehension. The thing to be dealt with is a particular species of property, and as such it must be regarded. To mystify the subject by language implying that we have to do with a Church (meaning by the term a congregation of faithful men) would be absurd. Five-sixths of the money pocketed by the clergy are as far removed from any connection

with the religious instruction of the people as landlords' rents or queen's taxes. The working clergy, the curates who would fare much better and escape a wretched bondage under the voluntary system—these are the men that do the work, such as it is. And they would do it were the compulsory system extinguished to-morrow—those of them, we mean, who love the work to which they are set apart. No! we are not dealing with a Church, but with an aristocratic, self-elect corporation, possessed of vast wealth and special privileges—a monopoly which is more baneful than any under which the country groans.

Abolish it, we say, but let no member of it suffer. Relieve Christianity from the reproach of being subject to the management of a secular aristocracy. Let them claim what they will, but suffer them no longer to be lords in the Church of Jesus Christ.

CLERICAL INFLUENCE NECESSARILY ARISTOCRATIC.—Fifteen thousand clergy trained in the most exclusive spirit at universities where subserviency to rank is not only taught but practised—receiving each his appointment to a living from the hands of a land-owning patron, or what is much to the same purpose, from those of a bishop or the crown—looking to the same source for future preferment, dependent for intercourse with aristocratic society upon the good-will of the neighbouring squire—sympathising with all the sectional feelings of the order, as being themselves members of a privileged class—wielding, to appearance, the dreadful sanctions of religion—almoners, usually, of parochial funds and the great man's bounty—conduits, through which may flow to bowing tradesmen the custom of the rich—having access to every house, able to assume an air of authority, and, in virtue of their office, to work upon religious fears and affections—fifteen thousand clergy thus dependent on the one hand, and powerful on the other—to the aristocracy pledged servants, to their own flocks supreme dictators—stationed at convenient intervals over the length and breadth of the land, and thus coming in contact with


society at all points—could mechanism more fatal to religion or more serviceable to the interests of the upper class be framed and put together?

**A STATE CHURCH THE NURSE AND PATRONESS OF WAR.**—We say then of a State Church that she is the nurse and patroness of war. Necessarily so. She adopts compulsion, which is the abstract of which the sword is the concrete, and of which the destruction of God's best and most exquisitely skilful mechanism is the result.

She clothes force—the force which breaks in pieces but not builds—with the seeming sanction of heaven; she links religion arm in arm with the madness against which the command of the Highest is levelled, and which real Christianity repudiates with unwonted scorn—the madness which tramples upon God's image in His own creatures.

Trace the history of this, or any other State Church, and almost every footstep plashes in the blood of man. How many brave and beauteous edifices of humanity have been shattered and left in ruins at the behest of this sword-allied Church, formerly in assertion of her right to prescribe the faith, latterly in maintenance of her determination to fleece the wealth of quiet, unoffending men? Directly or indirectly, for her own especial purposes or for purposes which she sanctioned as nearly affecting her worldly privileges, what havoc has she not made of a nation's peace? Unnumbered have been the souls which at her bidding have been sent prematurely into the presence of the Great Judge; altogether incalculable the social ties which she has hewn asunder with cold steel! And even now, does she not until this day, by her union with sword-power, practically assert the doctrine "killing no murder" is part and parcel of the law of Christ?

**EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES OF AN ESTABLISHMENT PER-  
NICIOUS.**—We remember being told in our youthful days that dog-fanciers succeeded in producing the race of tiny lap-dogs by administering gin to them while puppies and thus preventing their further growth. We shall not need to insist upon



the correctness of our information. True or false it will serve to illustrate our present subject. The main end of the system of education worked by the clergy seems to be to hinder the free development of the youthful mind and to produce a race of intellectual dwarfs. With the miserable pittance of instruction, the coarsest rudiments of knowledge imparted in their schools, they mingle slavish maxims *usque ad nauseam*. Habits of inquiry constitute just the one thing which they labour to prevent—independence of mind—the cardinal sin which the youngsters are taught to shun. To do what they are bid, to think as they are taught, to believe what they are taught by clerical authority, to go to church without knowing why, to submit to government as it is without asking wherefore, to be reading and writing machines to subserve the purposes of the powerful and rich, mere living copies of a primer and a prayer-book—this is what our rising generation are to gain by the generous aid of the Establishment.

**SPIRITUAL FREEDOM INCOMPATIBLE WITH STATE CONTROL.**  
—The study of truth revealed in Scripture constitutes the noblest exercise of our intellectual powers. A world is therein thrown open to our research teeming with the richest, the fullest, the most varied and impressive illustrations of the divine character. The phenomena of that world, so far as they come under our inspection, require in their investigation the nicest care, the utmost simplicity of spirit, the cordial love of truth for its own sake, and the most determined resolution to follow where it leads. If ever, in the pursuit of knowledge, it be necessary to divest the mind of prejudice, to remove from the judgment every possible temptation to be led astray by passion, and to cultivate that childlike meekness of spirit which listens only to understand, which understands only to obey, most assuredly it is here. And can anything be more monstrous than for statesmen to prescribe, to interpret, to patronise here, and chain down the mind to authorised creeds, and offer bribes to conscience, and attempt to sway, by appealing to interested

motives, the decisions of mankind? Is it not appalling that in religion the interference of governments should be tolerated with indifference, and even vociferously applauded, when in natural science it would be scouted with indignation? Are we to be slaves of system where we ought to be most free? tempted to take our knowledge at second hand, where anxious examination and diligent inquiry constitute our most sacred obligation? degraded for our independence, where implicit faith is at once dangerous and criminal? What could we expect from such a daring violation of the freedom of mind but ignorant and servile credulity on the one hand, or empty formality and loathsome hypocrisy on the other?

STATE PROTECTORATE OF RELIGION BREEDS SUSPICION.—“Go to, sirrah,” said Jack Cade to Stafford, “go to, sirrah, tell the king from me that for his father's sake, Henry the Fifth, in whose time boys went to spancounter for French crowns, I am content he shall reign, but I'll be protector over him.” This is rich enough in all conscience, but our legislators outdo this a long way. They are content that the Bible should be the supreme authority in matters ecclesiastical, but then they will be protectors over it—stamp it with their sanction, cover its weakness with their strength, hide its defects with the mantle of their patronage, and condescendingly give it importance in the eyes of the people by declaring it to be their *protégé*. They are the veritable Jack Cades of the Church, uttering the same boast and acting the same part in religious affairs, which the Kentish rebel did in Richard the Second's time in affairs purely civil. The effect, too, is much the same; it is just of a piece with that which would result from the testimony of one of the swell mob in favour of an honest man; it brings under suspicion what, until they meddled with it, could appeal to its own character and secure an honourable verdict.

EFFECTS OF “TOLERATION.”—Toleration—accepting permission to worship God—has wonderfully domesticated us. There is a super-loyalty about Dissenters in the present



day, an exuberance—we may say a rankness—of respect to the powers that be; a scrambling forwardness to profess homage; a sensitive reluctance to offend; a little compact ambition to behave as respectable, well-trained, gentlemanly members of society, which mark them as under conscious obligations for being allowed to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. They shun nothing so much as making a noise about their principles. Theirs is the *ne plus ultra* of passivity of spirit. They lick the hand which smites them, and crouch and whine at the feet of those who kick them. In their own exclusive circles how magnanimously they can talk of their inalienable rights, and yet no sooner does a state dignitary come amongst them than they button up, in all imaginable haste, their rights in their pockets, and look as confused as if they had been guilty of some crime. Should any one of their number venture to speak out, and tell truth offensive to ears polite, all the rest look down upon the ground, inwardly approve, and outwardly say “Fie!” They are just like poor relations living upon the cold charity of a well-off uncle, half-obsequiousness, half-irritability, in conduct very meek, in disposition somewhat sly, who seldom speak above a whisper, and interweave with every sentence twice the average number of the usual terms of respect—in whom there is waging incessantly, but unnoticed, a conflict between desire and habit—desire to assert independence, and habit of subservience; who feel that they belong to nobody, not even to themselves, and gradually sink down into a tacit admission that they were born to be snubbed, to eat their victuals on sufferance, and to wear the cast-off clothes of the legitimate members of the family. What is the inevitable consequence? All around us there exists a stagnant and oppressive atmosphere of contempt. The point on which we stand does not lift us above it. We cannot escape it—we breathe it daily. In the primitive age of Christianity, at the Reformation, and during the years of Puritan persecution, the moral heroism of the devout elevated them far above simple derision. ✓

With us, moral heroism is impossible, and we go about the world with a label on our backs, on which nothing more is written than the word "Fool." Nobody hinders us, we may walk where we please; but the brand is upon us, and we cannot forget it. We become ashamed of ourselves, ashamed of our principles; and look, and speak, and act as though we were ordained to be despised and have made our calling sure.

"THE POOR MAN'S CHURCH."—In one sense the clergy are quite correct in designating the Establishment "the poor man's Church," for certainly poor men do much to support it. First of all, a fourth part of the property now enjoyed by the successors in an unbroken line of the apostles, constituted the sacred inheritance of the poor. What therefore is so largely enriched, by an unblushing spoliation of the "vested rights" of poverty, may not inaptly be denominated as peculiarly "the poor man's." Then, towards its support, the poor man largely contributes. For although, unhappily, there are few cases in which he has a strip of garden to be tithed, every mouth that eats pays heavily to the Establishment, in the enhancement of the price of bread necessarily caused by the State Church demands. For nothing is more evident than that the consumer ultimately pays the burdens which fall upon the cultivator of the soil. Of these, tithe and poor rates may be considered the bulk. The poor, who are the chief consumers of bread, mainly support this plethoric ecclesiastical corporation. They are robbed in every direction. They had once a sufficient estate to meet their wants; this has been taken from them by our most beneficent Establishment; and to meet the deficiency a tax, under the name of poor rate, is laid upon the bread they eat; and lest they should not be sufficiently interested in an institution to which their whole patrimony has been transferred, a further tax to three times the amount is laid upon the chief article of their subsistence, in the shape of tithe. The money which flows into the coffers of the Church seems to come from the agriculturists, just as the water which pours into a neighbouring pond

appears to come from the various drains which directly open into it. But in reality the drain is only the contrivance by which moisture may be drawn from the surrounding soil, and the channel through which it runs. The agriculturists only collect in pence, paid by the poor for bread, the sums transferred by them at the annual tithe audit. Food pays the Establishment, and sustains its burnished dignity; and those who eat most bread ultimately pay most largely towards the expenses of priestism. Not altogether without reason, therefore, is our national Church called "the poor man's Church," for, assuredly, he is the main contributor to its wealth.

Of a truth, one would do no great violence to reason, were he to conclude that the flock thus fleeced by indirect exaction would be permitted to enjoy unmolested the benefits arising from being penned up within the sacred fold. But no! Bald-headed infancy and simplicity carried up to the font by sponsors, to be regenerated by water and the sign of the cross, is not allowed to depart without leaving behind it a legal fee. Maternal gratitude, strongly impregnated with superstition, cannot express itself in public assembly without having first deposited its fee. Poverty immured in a work-house cannot be spiritually cared for until, by somebody, the fee has been secured. Death itself is not exempt from taxation in "the poor man's Church," and the rights of sepulture are given only in exchange for a fee. Money—money—money—nothing can be done in this Church without money.

Such was the character of the ecclesiastical articles which appeared week after week successively in the early issues of the *Nonconformist*, and which, as already stated, were reproduced in book form under the title of the *Nonconformist Sketch-Book*. Five and twenty years later, as my father himself expressed it, "a favourite mode of attempting to paralyse the

writer's moral influence in places at which he intended to address the public," was to insert isolated extracts, or *excerpta*, from this series of articles in the local journals, or to scatter them abroad in the shape of handbills. Especially was this done at Bradford in 1867, the walls of the town being placarded with short and pungent specimens. This induced him to publish a new edition, without alteration of the text, but accompanied by an explanatory preface. Although it may be anticipating the course of this narrative, the perusal of the foregoing extracts should in justice to my father be read in conjunction with the writer's later explanation, which, while it shows him still adhering to the lines of argument pursued in the series of articles under notice, contains a candid admission that "were he called upon in his maturer age by sense of duty to go over again the same lines of thought, his disposition would incline him to bear himself more gently and in a somewhat more modest, kindly, charitable spirit, than he did when he was a controversial novice." At the same time he points out that "when he speaks of the Church of England, it must be understood that he does not now, nor did he at first, refer to it as a spiritual, but solely as a political institution." . . . "It was the legal, not the religious element of the Anglican Church against which he levied his denunciations, or if at any time against the latter, solely as a natural consequence of the former."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE COMPLETE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT.

1841—1842 (*continued*).

The Chartist Agitation—Physical Force *v.* Moral Force Chartists—Attempt to combine the latter with Middle-Class Reformers—"Reconciliation of the Middle and Lower Classes," a Series of Articles by Mr. Miall, reprinted by the Complete Suffrage Union—Abridgment of the Argument—Conference at Birmingham—Mr. Miall successfully counsels Moderation—Convincing Character of the reprint illustrated—The *Nonconformist* adopted as the organ of the Complete Suffrage Union.

THE *Nonconformist* entered the political arena during the second stage of the Chartist agitation. The ablest advocates of "the People's Charter" had paid the penalty of imprisonment, accompanied, in some instances, by undue severity of treatment, for their inflammatory language, aggravated, as it was in the case of a few, by some show of violence. William Lovett, John Collins, Henry Vincent, J. B. O'Brien, and other ardent reformers whose valour had outrun their discretion had been arrested under a Whig Ministry, and had undergone various terms of imprisonment.

Shortly after their release the People's Charter was

again heard of in connection with large and excited gatherings of the masses. There were political Chartists and social Chartists; the latter principally being recruited from the ranks of the wretched malcontents whom enforced idleness and penury was making desperate and vengeful. The division became more marked as time wore on, the several combatants ranging themselves under the banners of the physical force Chartists and the moral force Chartists, and the country was to all appearance on the brink of revolution. It was at this stage that Mr. Miall conceived it to be his duty as the exponent of the principles of civil and religious equality, to aim at a reconciliation of the middle and lower classes upon the principal point in the People's Charter, namely, the extension of the suffrage. A reconciliation was, indeed, at that time a much-needed consummation. On the one side were fear and distrust: on the other jealousy and alienation. The Reform of 1832, towards the accomplishment of which the working classes had so largely contributed, had brought them nothing. Tory Ministry and Whig Ministry were alike indifferent to the real burdens of the people, and the declaration of finality made by Lord John Russell left them no encouragement to hope that their claims would be considered. The Anti-Corn-Law League, which was at this time the most formidable political organisation, was essentially a middle-class movement, though its operations were directed towards the removal of an

impost that told most heavily upon the poor. My father addressed himself in successive numbers of the *Nonconformist* to the examination of the question of a complete suffrage, and the series of articles on this subject was afterwards reprinted as a tract by the National Complete Suffrage Union, and circulated broadcast amongst the reformers of that time.

An abridgment of the argument pursued in these articles is all that can be attempted here, but this affords no adequate idea of their force and aptness. It is insisted at the outset that the suffrage is a right; the proper corollary to the truth that "government is made for man, and not man for government" is this other that "the people are the legitimate source of power." The true interpretation of this is: "I give you authority that you may give me protection. The right to be part and parcel of the government which exists *for* us, and whose power is delegated to it by ourselves—in other words, the right to enforce our view of its obligations by proxy, *i.e.*, to have our voice in the election of those who are to determine upon what is and what is not protection—is evidently antecedent to all conventional arrangement, and must stand or fall with the maxim with which we started, that the people are the only legitimate source of power."

An appeal is then made to the middle classes to raise their poorer fellow-citizens to this elevation. "The middle classes enjoy the right of choosing

parliamentary representatives, and the right is enjoyed by them almost exclusively. The representation may be fairly considered to be in their hands. The House of Commons is their creature. With them, consequently, resides the power to give the franchise to those who have it not." . . . "The labouring classes are deprived of protection not so much by those whose interest it is to wrong them, and who scruple not to do it, as by those who possess the power to right them, but refuse to exert that power."

To the objection that it is inexpedient to allow them their claim it is answered that the middle classes are not to be the judges of what is or what is not in the interest of the labouring classes, and that if the former hold the franchise exclusively in their hands, they must hold it as a trust for the latter as well as for themselves. "We are bound, therefore, to afford them protection to the same extent as they might justly take in case the franchise was theirs. But how stands the fact? They are almost wholly unprotected. They are taxed more heavily than any other class. Law, accessible to others, is of small avail to them; for justice is expensive, and they have no means to purchase it. The fruits of their toil are wrested from them, and industry and skill, their only property, taken from them to augment the boundless wealth of the landlords." "We cannot cure the evil ourselves, and what is worse, we will not allow them to cure it."

As to the limits of the franchise: (1) The



“possession of the franchise presupposes a uniform submission to the law of the land, and every man legally convicted of crime forfeits thenceforth his title to the suffrage.” (2) Those “whose actions are under the legal control of others, who, in the eye of the law, are not their own masters, free to choose their own occupation, and enjoy for themselves the proceeds of their own labour, can hardly be invested with the responsibility of the franchise. This limitation excludes all minors and paupers.” (3) “Vagrants, foreigners, and criminals whose term of imprisonment had expired might hurry from polling-place to polling-place, and sweep away the real sense of the constituents by fictitious votes. Out of this danger arises the necessity of associating the franchise with a local habitation, and with such a term of residence as may prove an effectual guarantee against fraudulent proceedings. Such a guarantee is afforded by six months’ residence in the district within which the voter claims to record his vote.”

The moral effect of a complete suffrage would be most beneficial. “Tell any class of men that they are a worthless *caste*, not to be trusted with their own rights, incapable of understanding their own wants, but a scant degree above the level of brutes, treat them with suspicion, call them the unwashed rabble, harass them with trespass- and game-laws, set before them the ultimate prospect of union-house fare and union-house confinement: and if you do not make them reckless and dissolute, careless of others’ rights,

negligent of education and negligent of religion—it is no fault of yours. You have done your best.” . . .

“The way to make them aspire is not to treat them as things of nought—to make them love order and revere law is not to refuse them the benefits of order, and turn law into an engine for their oppression. Place them where they are entitled to be, give them what they are entitled to have, and whilst you take away the main inducements to insubordination, you supply at the same time the main motive to industrious, sober, and peaceable behaviour.” . . .

“Let us justly, kindly, cheerfully restore them to political equality with ourselves, and we say there is nothing forbearing, nothing generous, nothing self-sacrificing to which they might not be led. Proudly do we bear our testimony to their susceptibility of gratitude. In all instances we have ever observed, that respect paid to them they are ready to repay tenfold. Kindness touches them more closely than it does us, for they are less familiar with it.”

It is objected, however, that the masses are ignorant ; that education should precede an extension of political power ; that the labouring classes would become tools of designing men, and “great principles of policy, instead of being settled by calm discussion, by reason and argument, would be decided by numbers and by clamour.” “The objection implies a great deal that is not true—exaggerates facts that have some colour of truth—and leaves out of sight several considerations quite pertinent to the matter,

which being allowed their due influence, completely neutralise the whole argument. When the ignorance of the labouring classes is urged as a sufficient plea for withholding from them the franchise, it is tacitly assumed that, under the present restricted system, affairs of state are mainly settled by the intelligence of our constituencies, are discussed with fairness, and decided according to their merits. Now the very reverse of all this is matter of notoriety." . . . "Are not nine votes out of every ten recorded as the result of influences which have no more connection with the right and wrong of the matter they go to decide than exists between Iceland and Timbuctoo?" "Intelligence! Take, now, the House of Commons, and analyse the product of this intelligence. . . . Only one question we would ask—would complete suffrage, as we have defined it, thrust into one assembly of equal numbers an amount of stolid ignorance, in reference to state policy, greater than that to which we, the middle classes, have committed the interests of this mighty empire?" Again, so much of the objection as is founded in truth is greatly exaggerated. Ignorant they may be, but they are quite competent to "form a correct judgment upon the soundness of great political principles, due information having been laid before them." . . . "Look back upon the past ten years. The masses, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, have evinced their sentiments upon the leading topics of policy which, during that time, have agitated the


nation. Have they sided with ignorance or intelligence? with justice or with injustice? with selfishness or with generosity?" . . . "Now, since we practically appeal to their suffrage, it is too late to urge when they claim to be allowed to embody it in a vote, that they are not sufficiently intelligent. We admit their intelligence when we address ourselves to the task of laying before them requisite information; when we ask their verdict; and having obtained it, plead that verdict as an argument in our own favour."

But it is urged they are liable to be swayed by corrupt motives. "May we not fairly expect," it is objected, "that they whose social station is one of entire dependence upon others, would be the ready tools of others? That a pot of beer (a favourite way of putting the case) or a few shillings, or the prospect of loss of employment, would in most instances decide the way in which the franchise might be exercised? To this it is answered, "Political corruptibility is not an accident of station. . . . To seek immediate and personal advantage, in preference to a remote and uncertain public good, is a disposition not confined to the poor—it belongs to man. . . ." We seek an independent and virtuous body of electors—we cannot get one—we have not got one—we never had one. Bribery and intimidation! they are ubiquitous—they assail all classes—they are practised by all parties—they assume every possible variety of shape—they adapt themselves to

every rank and condition of life ; in one instance, 'gross, open, palpable,' in another, subtle as a summer's breeze—here doing their baneful work by gorging men's sensual appetites, there, by tickling their vanity ; oozing out in some places through a sly insinuation, in others lurking in an aristocratic smile ; now glancing from a banker's eye, frowning from the brow of a landlord, or twanged by the tongue of a master manufacturer, then riding into a man's heart upon a present of game, or an invitation to dine at the great house, or an inquiry after the welfare and business capabilities of an elder son in search of a situation." But what is the great inducement to the practice of bribery ? " Is it not that government is a system of patronage carried on for the benefit of the few rather than the welfare of the many ? . . . " " Where is bribery most successful, and where is it therefore most usually resorted to ? In London or in Harwich ? In Manchester or in Bridport ? Give complete suffrage, qualified by electoral districts and the ballot, and you render the evils alluded to almost impracticable." . . . " A disinclination to *take* bribes we cannot insure ; but we can go far to cut away the motives, and to create an impossibility to *offer* bribes, and that is the next best thing. Religion only can compass the first—complete suffrage would meanwhile guarantee the last."

A final article is devoted to the alleged revolutionary designs of the labouring classes. " They are destitute," so the objection runs, " of any stake in

the country. They have nothing to lose in a general convulsion of society. Discontented with the station assigned them by Providence, they want nothing but the power, to put forth their hands against every right which government secures to us. With the franchise in their hands, and by consequence, legislation under their control, property would no longer be safe. Should we invest them with political power, we must prepare ourselves for a general scramble." "To base unrighteous policy upon the assumption," the objector is answered, "that men are filled with mischief, which nothing but oppression can restrain, is to build up wickedness upon falsehood." . . . "Nor ought we to forget, that encroachment upon the property of the poor by the rich, is not less warmly to be deprecated, than encroachment upon the property of the rich by the poor. Whilst we attribute to the working men evil *designs*, they can charge us on evidence not to be pushed aside with evil *doings*. Our parliament robs them. Their parliament might or might not rob us. We, by our representatives, seize upon their scanty earnings, and hand over a moiety to the landlords. We are the last persons, therefore, who ought to urge against the labouring classes the entertainment of dishonest intents as a sufficient reason for not giving them the franchise; for we as a class have used the franchise, which we keep in our own hands, to maintain dishonesty in actual being and operation." . . . "The ravings of noisy dema-



gogues, and the menaces of this or the other organ of democratic principles must be taken for what they are worth, and no more. . . ." "As a class they are honest; they abhor theft; they detest spoliation. Would that their professed superiors were more like them in this respect." "If evil designs are meditated by the labouring class, they must be frustrated, not by severity, but by generosity. They are too numerous a body to be despised with impunity. They are now become too intelligent a body to be long controlled by force or fraud. The suffrage they will have—the only question that remains is a question of time. Which, then, is the wiser course? To withhold their rights until compelled to give them up, or of our own free will and sense of justice, to proffer immediately our assistance and cooperation. If we do the first we allow time, and afford occasion for revolutionary designs to lay fast hold of the hearts of our working men—if the last they will gladly join us in hunting out of society every unjust principle and every mischievous interest. The way to 'slay enmity' is to show love. '*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*'"

The *Nonconformist* lent its aid continuously to the Anti-Corn-Law movement, but after the general election of 1841, and the consequent displacement of Lord Melbourne's cabinet by that of Sir Robert Peel, my father strenuously endeavoured to enlist the cooperation of the "League" in obtaining the extended suffrage advocated in the series of articles just referred to. The Tories had come into power with a

large majority. The premier's declaration of policy gave no hope of any serious attempt being made during his term of office to reduce the duties on the importation of corn. Mr. Joseph Sturge warmly supported Mr. Miall's effort, and on the occasion of an important meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law deputies at Manchester, introduced the subject to the principal leaders of the movement, and a conversation ensued which resulted in the following declaration being drawn up and numerous signed:—"Deeply impressed with the conviction of the evils arising from class legislation, and of the sufferings thereby inflicted upon our industrious fellow-subjects, the undersigned affirm that a large majority of the people of this country are unjustly excluded from that fair, full, and free exercise of the elective franchise to which they are entitled by the great principle of Christian equity, and also by the British constitution, for '*no subject of England can be constrained to pay any aids or taxes even for the defence of the realme or the support of the government, but such as are imposed by his own consent or that of his representatives in parliament.*'" <sup>1</sup>


The effect of these appeals was the fusion of all the more orderly and progressive workers of the Anti-Corn-Law movement with the moral-force Chartists, and their hearty and zealous combination for the political rights which both alike desired.

In April, 1842, a Conference met at Birmingham,

<sup>1</sup> Blackstone's *Commentaries*, vol. i. book i. chap. i.



and continued its sittings for four days, the object of which was, to put it briefly, "to put an end to class legislation." Mr. Joseph Sturge presided; the principal Chartist leaders, Lovett, O'Brien, Henry Vincent, Collins, together with Bright, Miall, Mursell, Solly, Sharman Crawford, M.P., and leading politicians, delegated by public assemblies from all parts of the kingdom were present, and took part in the proceedings. An attempt was made by some of the more fiery sort to drag in "the charter, the whole charter, and nothing but the charter," but more moderate counsels prevailed, Mr. Miall taking a firm stand in his contention for the abstract principle of the suffrage as a right, and deprecating the introduction at that stage of details which would distract rather than consolidate the energies of practical reformers. Testimony was borne repeatedly to the great value of the series of articles already referred to. One speaker said, "I asked one of my neighbours to sign the declaration for complete suffrage; he refused, considering that I entertained extreme opinions, and was going beyond all reasonable bounds. I said to him, 'Will you read the tract?' He replied, Yes, but that would not alter his opinion on the subject, and that he had seen the evil effects of extending the suffrage in our town among small voters, and that my plan would make it ten times worse. . . . In the course of a few days I met my friend again, and asked him if he had read the tract. He said he had. 'Did he want to talk over the matter now?' No, he said I had rendered



that quite unnecessary. He was fully convinced of the necessity of extending the franchise to every man, and that nothing less than that would do for him now; and that such was the forcible reasoning employed in the tract that he would defy any honest man to withstand it. He then signed the declaration. This is only one instance among scores that I could mention."<sup>1</sup> Before the Conference closed this estimate was endorsed by many of the speakers, and a formal resolution was "carried by acclamation," recording "the heartfelt gratitude of this Conference to Mr. Miall, editor of the *Nonconformist*, for his powerful advocacy of their principles."

The practical outcome of the Conference was "The National Complete Suffrage Union," an organisation that continued for many succeeding years to press the subject of "complete suffrage" upon the attention of the electors and non-electors of every constituency of the kingdom by means of the press, the platform, and every available method of propagandism.

Throughout the whole of the year 1842 my father continued to contribute week by week articles bearing upon the subject of reform, characterised by all the freshness and force which were acknowledged to distinguish his writings upon the State Church

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph Sturge also "had no hesitation in saying that Mr. Miall had done more by his writings to promote the great object they had in view during the last three months than any one individual had ever achieved in the same space of time."

question, and the *Nonconformist* was formally constituted the organ of the "National Complete Suffrage Union." In consenting to this arrangement, the editor at the outset, and on other occasions, distinctly stipulated that "he should be as fully at liberty to criticise with impartiality, and to speak of, if need be with censure, the proceedings of the Union, as he should that of any other body in existence." He must be regarded, "not as speaking their sentiments, but as publishing authentic intelligence respecting their movements."

The records of the "Complete Suffrage Union" continued for many years to occupy the columns of the *Nonconformist* at some length, but the editor became so fully absorbed in his journalistic labours, and in the work of the Anti-State-Church Association, that his public appearances in connection with this movement for political reform ended with the second great conference at Birmingham in December, 1842.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FOUNDING OF THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

1843—1845.

Increase and growing Influence of Political Nonconformists—Secession of Five Hundred Ministers from the Established Church of Scotland—Sir James Graham's Factory Education Bill—Educational Clauses Abandoned—General Convention on State Church Question Proposed—Preparations in London and the Country—Conference at the Crown and Anchor—Formation of the British Anti-State-Church Association—Proceedings—Constitution of the Association—Early Difficulties and Hostile Feeling encountered.—1845 : Opposition to the Maynooth Grant—Mr. Miall's Visit to Ireland—O'Connell in Prison—Letter to Mrs. Miall.

DURING the year 1843 unmistakable signs of a political awakening appeared amongst Dissenters, and this result was confessedly in no small degree attributable to the influence of Mr. Miall's writings. There was, in fact, a new school of politicians growing up, whose members were distributed pretty generally throughout society, who, although comparatively few in number, were united and resolute in action, and wielded an influence extending beyond the particular communities to which they were attached. The singleness of their aim, and the

stability and earnestness of purpose manifested by them in the various movements for promoting the principles of civil and religious equality, had won for them the confidence of the more intelligent of the working classes, and made them a power in the body politic. "There exists in this country," writes Mr. Miall,<sup>1</sup> "an amount of feeling and determination, which, when drawn to one common centre, will constitute a formidable power."

Two circumstances occurred in 1843 which had a remarkable influence in arousing the enthusiasm of Dissenters, and giving a direction to their efforts. The secession of more than five hundred ministers of the Established Church of Scotland, and the formation of the Free Church of Scotland, although brought about by no conviction of the unsoundness of the State Church principle, gave an impetus to the Free Church idea which was sensibly felt, not only in Scotland, but on this side the border. Dr. Chalmers, the great champion of the Establishment principle, and one of the seceders, declared that if Voluntaryism stood the trial to which it was now put, he would be heartily glad, even though it should make such a demonstration of its excellence and power as well-nigh to submerge himself and utterly to overwhelm his arguments. Appeals were made to English and Scotch Dissenters for help to create a fund for the new Church, and in a few months 300,000*l.* was raised for the erection of new buildings and for

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. iii. p. 309.




the ministers' stipends. The *Nonconformist*, while contending that the decision of Government which had led to the rupture, viz., the refusal of a veto to parishioners in the exercise of patronage, was a most legitimate application of the State Church principle, counselled Dissenters to meet the appeal now made to them by the seceders in a spirit of frank liberality. "Let us show them that we Southrons can do two things—appreciate what is noble, and forgive what is infirm." A better opportunity could hardly have been wished for practically exemplifying the efficacy of the Voluntary principle and demonstrating the logical outcome of State alliance when the fiat of the Government came into conflict with the will of the people.

The other circumstance to which allusion has been made was the introduction into Parliament by Sir James Graham of the Factories' Education Bill, which provided for the compulsory secular and religious education of all children employed in factories. The scheme was at once denounced by my father as an attempt to create an educational establishment in which the State schoolmaster was to do the work which the State priest was unable to effect. The opposition to it throughout the country was spontaneous and irresistible. The spirit of Dissent was thoroughly roused. There was more in the Government scheme than the infraction of a principle which English Voluntaries held sacred; there was a threatened usurpation of the authority

and influence over the young of a great army of Sunday school teachers—an insidious attempt to undermine the entire system of voluntary instruction in the manufacturing districts which the Nonconformists of all sects had built up with years of self-denying toil. When the full scope of Sir James Graham's proposals was understood, a spirit of resistance was evoked which must have made that minister regret that he had not better understood the temper of Dissent. He offered a compromise, but this met with no better reception. Meetings were held by hundreds, calling upon the Government to abandon the measure, and upwards of 24,000 petitions, containing 4,000,000 signatures against the original bill or the amended clauses, were sent up to Parliament. One member, Mr. Charles Hindley, who on a single night had charge of 500 petitions, was obliged to ask the assistance of four members in carrying them to the table. The resistance was effectual. On the 15th June the educational clauses of the Factories' Bill were abandoned.

Mr. Miall sought at once to turn this victory to account in organising a permanent system of aggressive warfare against the State Church system. "We may now bid a final adieu to the system of petty warfare," he writes. ". . . Sir James Graham's ecclesiastical policy in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales has served to quicken opinion into feeling, and that feeling will now, we confidently anticipate,



run into the permanent form of united and effective organisation." <sup>1</sup>

Following up this appeal, he invited his readers to communicate their views upon the subject of holding a General Convention on the State Church question, with a view to the formation of such a permanent organisation as he had referred to. For several weeks following this invitation a stream of correspondence poured in, and articles in support of the proposal appeared in the principal local newspapers, leaving no room to doubt that the plan suggested would be taken up with sufficient enthusiasm. The London ministers were slow to move, there being only a few, amongst whom were Revs. Dr. Cox, Dr. Thomas Price, Dr. Andrew Reed, C. Stovel, J. H. Hinton, and J. Carlile, who would at this time lent their countenance to a forward movement. Leicester was in the van, and impatient of delay. The Dissenting bodies of the metropolis were finally aroused to participation in the Convention scheme by an appeal addressed to them in the autumn of 1843 by seventy ministers resident in the midland counties.

When once their decision was taken no effort was spared which energy and foresight could insure to lay the foundations of the Anti-State-Church Association on a wide and permanent basis. A provisional committee of 200 was formed at the Congregational Library, London, which again elected an executive

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. iii. p. 577.



of twenty-one members to open correspondence with Dissenters throughout the kingdom, for the purpose of appointing suitable men to send up as delegates to the approaching Convention. More than two months were employed in this preparatory work, and on the 30th April, 1844, the Conference, consisting of nearly 700 delegates, assembled at the Crown and Anchor Hotel to discuss the various aspects of the State Church question, and to form themselves into an association for the liberation of religion from all governmental or legislative interference. The object of the Conference was thus stated in the address of the executive committee:—

The object of the Conference will be to act upon the conscience and the heart of the Dissenting community, and to devise means adapted to bring them up to the level of their responsibility, in order that at as early a period as possible they may make their peaceful but united and determined efforts tell upon the legislature. A solemn exposition of the unscriptural character of Established Churches, an emphatic exhibition of the evils which necessarily flow from them, an avowed resolution to labour in every legitimate way for their abolition, and the adoption of such a plan of organisation as may secure unity of action without endangering freedom, will assuredly tend to enlighten the uninformed, to rouse the listless, to embolden the timid, to cheer on the energetic, and at no distant time so to elevate the tone of feeling as to render advisable the agitation of the question both within and without the walls of Parliament.

Those who have most closely watched the proceedings of the “Anti-State-Church Association” in

the early days when it was so called, and also since it has become notorious as the "Liberation Society," are best able to declare that the distinctive aims which the above extract sets forth so clearly and concisely have never for an instant been lost sight of by those who have during the last forty years directed the policy of the Society.

But to return to the Conference. The sittings extended over three days, the matter for discussion being introduced by the reading of papers by Revs. Dr. Cox, Dr. Wardlaw, J. W. Massie, J. P. Mursell, and Mr. Miall. The selection of topics for these gentlemen had been arranged by the executive committee, and the subject-matter for discussion was wide and various. The subject of Mr. Miall's paper was "Practical Evils resulting from the union of Church and State." The arguments advanced, and the illustrations used, in this admirable essay were similar to those which at greater length, and in a more popular and striking form, he had addressed to the readers of his paper during the past three years; but it was free from all redundancy of expression, and must have left upon all attentive listeners an impression of the speaker's earnestness and absolute mastery of the subject not lightly to be effaced. The other papers were marked by unusual ability, and the discussion that followed upon them was grave, intelligent, and practical. My father, reviewing these proceedings in the *Nonconformist*, writes:—

"We now find ourselves oppressed by the difficulty of calmly estimating the magnitude of that moral triumph which by means of it has been achieved. So great was the number of representatives convened, so large the conclusions at which they harmoniously arrived, so full of dignity was the tone which pervaded their speeches and proceedings, that we have been unable even yet to realise what nevertheless we apprehend to be the greatest 'fact' of the present age. It is like a dream to us—a lovely and majestic dream. We look back upon it with a feeling that it is too good to be true. Within a little week we have seen the desires of many years not merely fulfilled but outdone by the reality. And now we stand like men overwhelmed with astonishment at results which their own agency has contributed to bring about, and are disposed to hurry aside from public view, with the interrogation upon our lips, 'Who are we that any suggestions of ours should have been connected with so sublime a response?' The success of the Anti-State-Church Conference was happily of a character so far above previous calculation as to prevent the possibility of any party claiming credit for having produced it."

The constitution of the Association, as determined by the Conference, may be thus summarised :—

I. That a Society be now formed to be intituled "The British Anti-State-Church Association."

II. That this Society be based upon the following principle :—That in matters of religion man is responsible to God alone; that all legislation by secular governments in affairs of religion is an encroachment upon the rights of man, and an invasion of the prerogatives of God; and that the application by law of the resources of the State to the maintenance of any form or forms of religious worship and instruction is

contrary to reason, hostile to liberty, and directly opposed to the genius of Christianity.

III. That the object of the Society be, the liberation of religion from all governmental or legislative interference.

IV. That this object be sought by lawful, peaceful, and Christian means, and by such means only.

V. That every individual subscribing to the principle upon which this Society is based, and contributing not less than one shilling annually to its general fund, be admissible as a member.

VI. That the officers of this Society consist of a treasurer and three secretaries, three auditors, a council of five hundred, and an executive committee of fifty members.

VII. That the whole of the officers be, in the first instance, elected by the present Conference.

Mr. Miall, with Dr. Cox and Mr. J. M. Hare (of the *Patriot*), were elected joint secretaries to the new association. The first committee meeting held on the 6th June at the Guildhall Coffee House was attended by ten gentlemen, among whom were the honoured names of late H. H. Dobney of Maidstone, Charles Stovel, and Mr. William Baines of Leicester. Mr. Miall for the first few meetings was the minute secretary. The work of the executive was commenced without delay. Meetings were held weekly on the day following the publication of the *Nonconformist*, which must have been to my father like the desecration of the parson's Monday. The minor details of management having been arranged, the work of agitation and education was entered upon systematically. How great was the need of enlightenment upon the aims of the Society may be judged from

the fact that no banker in London would receive their account. Subsequently the London and Westminster allowed an account to be opened on behalf of the Association in the names of Dr. Price, Mr. Swaine, and Mr. Miall. Another indication of the strong feeling existing against the Association occurred a few weeks later, when all efforts to hire a chapel in the borough of Westminster for the delivery of lectures proved unavailing. The extension of the Society's work to the provinces was also beset with difficulty. Provincial associations in correspondence with a Central Executive were illegal. To obviate this objection a plan was prepared by my father for securing the co-operation of friends in the metropolitan districts and in the provinces, which, after being submitted to counsel and modified, was adopted by the Association and publicly announced by advertisement. Registrars were to be appointed for separate towns, villages, or districts, who should both receive subscriptions, enrol the names of members, distribute members' cards, and correspond with the Executive Committee on the subject of arrangements for the delivery of lectures, the holding of public meetings, and for the promotion of the objects of the Association by other means. Thus both in the metropolitan area and in the provinces, voluntary agents placed their services at the disposal of the Central Executive, and secured for their lectures, when they travelled from place to place, an eager and intelligent audience. An excellent series of tractates was also issued by

the Association in the first year of their existence, which found a circle of readers widely distributed to whom such an exposition of principles was welcome and serviceable. The persistent advocacy of views that implied and called for strenuous exertion in the domain of politics was necessarily provocative of much hostile feeling even amongst Dissenters.

"It happens very unfortunately," wrote Mr. Miall,<sup>1</sup> "that a bad name once acquired, whether justly or unjustly, is about the last thing in this world which one can rid himself of at pleasure. . . . Other men may mistake and be forgiven—your mistakes, be they ever so trivial, will be condemned without benefit of clergy. When you do ill, your actions will be regarded as the true interpreters of your motives. When well, your motives will be impugned with a view to depreciate your actions.

'I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell ;  
But this one thing I know full well,  
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.'

To this pass it invariably comes. Men first shun you, and then dislike you because they have shunned you. . . . To some such theory as this we are driven to account for the strange shyness and suspicion with which many men, sincere Dissenters in the main, regard the Anti-State Church movement, commenced at the late Conference."

The proposal of the Government to increase the endowment of the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth was the first parliamentary project that roused the

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. iv. p. 541.

opposition of the Association. The course then taken was one which was with great plausibility characterised as sectarian and narrow-minded, but their ground of objection was unassailable, based as it was upon their belief that "in matters of religion man is responsible to God alone; that all legislation by secular governments in affairs of religion is an encroachment upon the rights of man and an invasion of the prerogatives of God; and that the application by law of the resources of the State to the maintenance of any form or forms of religious worship and instruction is contrary to reason, hostile to human liberty, and directly opposed to the word of God." In recording this conviction and pressing it upon the intelligence of their fellow-countrymen they were careful to apply it no less to the Irish Regium Donum and the Protestant Established Church, than to the Roman Catholic priesthood. For the time being, however, their protests were apparently without effect. The Maynooth question continued to agitate the public mind for several months during the session of 1845, and the line taken by the Anti-State Church Association, as distinct from the opposition of Protestants as such, which was the prevailing character of the hostile demonstration made against the Government proposals by the majority of Churchmen, and by a section of Dissenters also, served to bring into prominence alike the objects of the Association and the statesmanlike qualities of its leaders.

The work of the Executive Committee of the

Association was arduous, and involved no small sacrifice of time and personal comfort. It need hardly be said that with Mr. Miall, as with other public exponents of its principles, this was wholly a labour of love, without fee or reward save that of a consciousness of consistency maintained and duty faithfully discharged. The undertaking was one involving grave responsibilities, and, once entered upon, could not be set aside; and, as the event proved, it entailed increasing devotion and personal exertion. The financial resources of the Society were at first but slender; the first year brought them only 1,000*l.*, and the enlarged sphere of operations to which they committed themselves, rendered it necessary that the provincial towns should be visited by the leaders of the movement with the view of increasing the funds and creating a larger constituency.

In the summer of 1844, the year before the Maynooth question occupied the public mind, Mr. Miall had an opportunity, in the company of his friend the late J. M. Webb, of visiting Ireland. It was during O'Connell's imprisonment. The great liberator, Ireland's uncrowned king, was committed to prison in that year for no better reason than that his patriotic speeches in favour of a Repeal of the Union had brought a Tory administration into contempt. There had been no inflammatory language, and nothing inciting to acts of violence. Not only in Ireland, but in England, this arbitrary proceeding was universally denounced. O'Connell had nobly



helped the people of England both in their efforts to obtain an extension of parliamentary representation, and in the agitation for a repeal of the Corn Laws. Mr. Miall visited the "prisoner for all Ireland" in his prison, and returned "deeply impressed with the conviction, that of all mistakes committed by the Peel Government in its recent conduct in Ireland, the most fatal one, not excepting the State trial itself, will turn out to be the imprisonment of O'Connell." But "confinement," writes Mr. Miall in concluding a long account of this visit,<sup>1</sup> "even with all the alleviations which O'Connell has, must be inexpressibly irksome to him, and yet he seems willing enough to endure. Upon my expressing the deep regret I felt at seeing him where he was, he cut me short with these words, 'Don't say that—don't say that—it's better as it is—better for the cause.' When remarking that he had freer space within his prison walls than most prisoners, he instantly said, 'O, this is not our only garden, we have another and a larger one than this—take my arm and I'll show it ye.' I observed no impatience, no symptoms of repining, no tacit expression of feeling that he had made a mistake. On the contrary, he appeared thoroughly satisfied, and when I congratulated him on the quiet demeanour of the Irish people, I shall not soon forget the sudden gleam of joy which lighted up his countenance as he asked, 'Isn't it beautiful?'" O'Connell shortly after this abandoned the repeal

<sup>1</sup> Letter from "Vale of Avoca," to the *Nonconformist*, vol. v. p. 550.

cause and looked for relief to Ireland in a scheme for self-government, which, however, he left it to others to formulate. This change of front revealed to Mr. Miall a fatal flaw in O'Connell's character, and his subsequent acquiescence in the increased endowment to Maynooth, spite of all his former protestations of attachment to the principle of voluntarism in religion, confirmed this later and less worthy estimate of his public aims and motives.

The following letter is extracted from a long descriptive letter written to his wife during the same tour:—

*To his WIFE.*

CORK, *July 31st, 1844.*

“ . . . These [ruins] are supposed to have been built previous to the introduction of Romanism into the island, and to have been the principal seat of Christianity in Ireland, in the earliest times. Indeed there is good evidence that what is now nothing but a mountain pass, was once occupied by a considerable city. There are ruins of the churches still standing, and a round tower (the most perfect in Ireland) certainly not much younger than 2,000 years. The object for which these towers were erected is involved in mystery. There are many of them in Ireland, and as they are frequent also in Persia, and identical in the mode of their construction, they are supposed to have been used in the worship of the sun some centuries before the introduction of Christianity. The whole neighbourhood abounds with legendary tales, principally respecting the feats of St. Kevin. This holy man (so goes the story) had a greater horror of feminine life than I have, and having unfortunately attracted and fixed the affections of a high-born maiden, he fled to Glendalough, and made a cave high up in the mountain side

overlooking the lake, in which he could live as a hermit, undisturbed in his heavenly meditations by the clatter of a woman's tongue. The lady, however, found out his retreat, of course, and having gained the cave, presented herself before the stonyhearted anchorite. You would suppose the man would have relented. Not a bit of it. He just lifted his foot, and kicked the maiden into the lake, where her burning love was cooled by death. However, the rascally saint was sorry when it was too late, and prayed that no mortal might be drowned there again. A prayer which is fulfilled, for the inhabitants never venture to bathe in the waters of that lake. Well! we were to honour this chap's domicile with a visit. We had a guide composed of half Druid and half Jew, with a rich brogue, a decent beard, a wonderful enthusiasm in his vocation, a good magazine of legendary lore, and a voice of thunder. He met us on our entrance to the place, and as he ran beside our car plunged into one of Tom Moore's melodies with as much fire as a youngster at school. At a certain spot, he stopped and pointed out to us a remarkable echo. It was assuredly a strangely distinct one. Line by line did this guide go through some poetical effusion, and line by line did echo answer him. The man shouted at the very top of his voice—for the echo was half a mile distant at the least—yet every word was returned, after an interval of a few seconds, with every minute inflection of tone. This exhibition over, we entered a boat, taking with us a fiddler evidently looking out for employment. As we pulled across the lake to the cave, a young woman, stoutly built, with naked feet, ran like a goat along the mountain side, now climbing, then scrambling, leaping from this place, and dancing along that, and all with such wonderful agility, that but for the somewhat dirty hue of her garments, you might very easily take her for the spirit of the poor maiden aforesaid, which indeed she was doing her best to represent. By the time we had got within sight of the cave, the dirty damsel was there, standing where

it made one dizzy to look up at her. Then came a short piercing scream—and she was down—not in the water but behind a projecting stone—and the drama was over. Of course she was back at our place of disembarkation, in time to receive a fee. But I must leave Glendalough, as we did after a slight refreshment seasoned with whisky. We had a most enchanting drive of twelve miles to the vale of Avoca, where we sojourned for the night. . . . On the whole I have been and am greatly delighted with Ireland. I like the country, I like the people. I prefer both in many respects to Scotland. Of course there is great distress in many parts, but not greater I verily believe than in many parts of England. The habits of the poorer sort are dirty. Their cots are universally shared with the pig “the gentleman who pays the rint,” and a “muck-heap” is before every peasant’s door. But except the very poorest they are clean in their persons—the women especially—and nowhere have I met with the begrimed, and positively stinking loathsomeness of Highland poverty. There is also far more of middle-class life than I had anticipated, and here there is not mere cleanliness, but elegance. Then the vivacity of all classes is charming. You meet with frank and forward good-nature everywhere. The temperance cause has also much improved the people, particularly carmen, boatmen, &c. But I must close. My hand is getting tired and my time is almost up. Good-bye, my dearest, for the present. Give my love and kisses to all the young’uns. Assure yourself that home will not be the less welcome to me after my wanderings than it was before. Address me at Mr. W. C. Logan’s, Cork, and give me any news you may deem interesting. Good-bye.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### COMMENCEMENT OF THE REIGN OF OPINION.

1846.

A Year of Crisis—The “Reign of Opinion” commenced—Free Trade Triumphs—The Anti-State Church Association and Parliamentary Representation—Southwark Election—E. Miall opposed to Sir W. Molesworth—Incidents of the Contest—Defeat—Altered Tone of Nonconformist Articles—Action for Libel, *Gathercole v. Miall*—Baron Parke’s Ruling—Opinions of the Press—Testimonial to Mr. Miall—Speech of the latter on Judge-made Law—Apprehension of Encroachment on Religious Liberty by the Russell Administration—Tour in Scotland for the Anti-State Church Association—Visit to Manchester and Liverpool—Public Discussion with Rev. Joseph Baylee—Letters to Wife and Daughter.

“WITHIN the circuit of the year just opened,” wrote Mr. Miall, in the first week of 1846, “we are destined to witness in Great Britain the commencement and peradventure the close of a political struggle, which, whatever shape it may assume, will be a fresh starting-point for national progress. . . . Every man will be compelled to take part in this conflict, every man will be called upon to act, and in all likelihood to suffer, under the banner of the one party or of the other. And since none can foresee precisely the ground upon which the decisive engagement will

be fought, nor consequently the road by which he will hereafter march to victory or to defeat, it behoves all to ascertain what principles are involved in the contest, and to make up their minds at once whether they will follow up those principles, to whatever unexpected extremities they may be thereby led."

It was well for my father that at a time when the greatest demands were made upon his mental energies, and the strength of resistance to be overcome had reached its climax, he should be heartened by the conviction that the final struggle for mastery was near at hand. In one direction indeed the struggle was over, and the triumph achieved, though as yet not declared. The will of the people, informed and controlled by Cobden, Bright, and the leaders of the Free Trade movement, gathering strength during a five years' contest, had forced itself into recognition by Sir Robert Peel, and impelled him to re-constitute his cabinet, that he might be free to follow out the line of policy which the nation had deliberately and determinately elected. Within three weeks of Mr. Miall's prediction, Sir Robert Peel made his famous avowal in the House of Commons, that "on the question of the Corn Laws his opinion had undergone a complete change." Protection in England was killed in 1846, but political and religious freedom were not to be achieved by a five years' struggle.

The evils endured by the victims of political and ecclesiastical misrule are not so gross and palpable as those which are felt in the prevalence of mean

physical conditions and a general decline of trade ; hence the forces opposed to the former are less easily arrayed, and less clamorous in their modes of action. My father's opinion was that a great national crisis was at hand, not only in relation to the food question, but as between opinion on the one hand, and power and privilege on the other. "The reign of opinion," he wrote at the close of 1845, "will be a sort of intermediate state towards the reign of truth and justice. It will not be all that the good will sigh for, but it will be a decided step towards it. To have done with the exaltation of brute force, which all aristocracies presuppose, will be a sensible relief, nor will it be a relief only—it will minister a potent stimulus to intellectual agitation of every kind."


Mr. Miall was no less active with his pen encouraging and instructing those who contended for free trade and political enfranchisement, than in stimulating and guiding those who formed the advanced guard of ecclesiastical reformers. In the first five volumes of the *Nonconformist*, his pen alone, with very occasional exceptions, furnished the editorial matter of the paper, and few were the newspaper writers of that or of any subsequent period, who wrote with such thorough knowledge of public events, or with so clear and undeviating an adherence to the cause of human progress, whether in the domain of foreign or domestic politics. It was indeed as if his whole being was absorbed in the struggle for life and liberty. His appearance on the

platform was at this time infrequent, but his labour for public ends was incessant. The Anti-State Church Association claimed much of his thought and energy. Never absent from the meetings of the Executive Committee, it fell to his lot not only to take a principal share in determining the course of action pursued by the Association, but in many instances to assist liberally in carrying out the details of their programme. In the summer of 1845 the Committee passed a resolution committing them to the selection of at least half a dozen candidates for parliamentary elections, who should be qualified to represent in the House of Commons the principles for which they were contending, at the same time declaring that they would in no instance contribute in any way to the cost of such elections.

My father was the first to enlist under this banner. In August 1845, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Southwark, by the death of Mr. Benjamin Wood. Sir William Molesworth was the Liberal candidate, but he was unacceptable to the more ardent sort of Liberals, more especially to the Dis-senters, and a cordial invitation was given to my father, to accept nomination on behalf of the friends of religious liberty in the borough. His principal friends, Mr. Apsley Pellatt and Mr. J. M. Webb, formed a finance committee, and undertook to carry him to the poll free of expense. His own views upon the significance of the election were thus stated in his paper. "It will be something gained to read an



impressive lesson to a powerful political party that the insults they have heaped upon principles dear to their former supporters are remembered and resented. The Southwark electors, those of them especially who are Dissenters, may show by other means than the success of a particular candidate that they are too much in earnest to be taken in by specious words—too intelligent to be perplexed by distinctions where there is no difference—and too independent to submit at discretion to club nomination—that the game of party has been played out without having produced any favourable results for the people, and that henceforth the real struggle at election contests must be expected to lie, not between man and man, but between principle and principle.” His address to the electors pointed out the folly of sending men to the House of Commons on the strength of indefinite professions of liberalism, who under current phrases concealed their real opinions, and when the pinch came were invariably at fault. He declared himself consecrated to the object of separation of Church and State, which he should pursue whether in or out of the House of Commons, with unflagging zeal; and referring to his part in the formation of the National Suffrage Union in 1842, advocated complete suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, abolition of property qualification, payment of members, and annual parliaments. The support accorded to him at the numerous public meetings which he addressed in various parts of the borough was of the most



popular sort, but the electors numbered only 5,640, and the "people" could not give to their voice the authority of their vote. The Whig candidate taunted him as to his former calling, styling him a "reverend," which drew from the latter the rejoinder that "it was not a worse preparation for the business of law-making to have been engaged for some years in preaching the gospel of truth and peace than to have been occupied in editing the works of the infidel Hobbes. Without reproaching Sir William for his religious sentiments, it must be said if he entertained views respecting civil and religious liberty at all in unison with those of Hobbes of Malmesbury, he had not acted a fair and open part in appealing to Protestant Dissenters for their support without frankly and explicitly declaring as much." At the hustings Sir William Molesworth took the unusual course of facing his opponent, and addressed his remarks directly to him, using such terms as these: "I am glad to meet you here face to face to scoff at your pretensions and to bid you defiance." My father, however, who never shrank from an open avowal of his opinions, met Sir William's vituperation with calmness and courtesy, and appealed to the electors to give him their support. A third candidate, a supporter of the Government, went to the poll, and the result proved a crushing defeat to the Radical candidate, the numbers being—Molesworth, 1,942; Pilcher, 1,176; Miall, 353.

The altered disposition of Dissenters at this time towards the State Church question as compared with that which prevailed when the *Nonconformist* was established, led the editor to adopt a different tone in his writings. In reviewing past labours he writes, "We claim to have contributed as much as most, in making good a position of high and solid principle, from which to carry on, hereafter, an effective warfare with all ecclesiastical assumptions. In thus doing, much of our labour has consisted in clearing away rubbish, and to those who form their opinions hastily, we have appeared intent only upon cutting down all that might chance to stand in our way. We make no apology for this. What we have done herein we have done advisedly. . . . But the time in our judgment is now come, to pass on to another and more advanced stage of our undertaking. Having established a sound, and as we think an impregnable position, it will be the part of wisdom to seek to draw over to it the good men of every denomination. . . . To charm away irritation—to soften and remove prejudice—and to present those aspects of truth which are especially persuasive—seems to us to be at this juncture, a timely enterprise." In pursuance of this policy a series of articles appeared in the new volume (1846) entitled the "Churchman's Mirror," and another series subsequently reprinted showing the "Workings of Willinghood." The aim of the first was to lay before the readers of the *Nonconformist* such arguments in favour of establishments

and such objections to the voluntary principle as were most influential in forming the decision of Churchmen on this subject, and to combat these views reasonably and fairly. In the second series, which was commenced after the parliamentary session was closed, it was proposed to look at "willinghood—voluntaryism we take to be a detestable term—in its essence, but only so far as it may enable us to mark the deviations from it in practice which so utterly mislead the public as to its real nature. Many are the proceedings which pass among Dissenters as appropriate forms of willinghood which when closely scrutinised turn out to be only compulsion in disguise. Some of these it will be our aim to catch and strip, that all may see of what ilk they are." Officialism in all its forms Mr. Miall had always pitilessly assailed and exposed whenever it stood opposed to independence of thought and action. Many were the enmities he had aroused by this uncompromising adherence to the fundamental principle of nonconformity, impartial as he was in illustrating its contravention by Churchman and Dissenter alike. "The fear of consequences, the motive with so many in deprecating a frank and unreserved utterance of opinion" was unknown to him. It was in this year of 1846 that he was called to answer to a charge of libel, and the charge, as it happened, was based upon an article almost immediately succeeding that in which he had declared his intention of charming away irritation and of softening

and removing prejudice. This was, in fact, one of the first results of calling in the aid of other writers to give "that variety of style and of illustration which 'constant readers' naturally desire." The article in question animadverted in unmeasured terms on the conduct of a clergyman named Gathercole, an apostate Dissenter, who as vicar of Chatteris, a living worth 2,000*l.* a year, had signalised his promotion by "dealing damnation" to all Dissenters and refusing to co-operate with them, or to sanction union between Churchmen of his parish and these blasphemous heretics for any of the common purposes of philanthropy. A few months after the appearance of this article, Mr. Miall, who refused to give up the name of the writer, was served with notice to appear at the Nisi Prius Court at Cambridge to defend an action for libel. The defence was conducted by Serjeant Byles before Mr. Baron Parke, but the latter ruled that there was no justification for the libel, for "he had yet to learn that there was any rigt in the press to publish an opinion of the conduct of a clergyman in his parish and the method in which he might see fit to administer its charities." The jury gave a verdict for the plaintiff, damages 200*l.*

This extraordinary deliverance was commented on with great severity both by the metropolitan and provincial press, the plain inference being pointed out that public writers would in fear of personal consequences be incapable of the proper discharge of their duties. "If this reported *dictum* be

authentic," wrote the *Daily News* " (and there is no higher judicial authority than Baron Parke), the cloth is rarely privileged. 'Justice hath liquored it.' The wearers may 'steal as in a castle cock-sure;' they have the receipt 'of fern seed and walk invisible.' Moral responsibility is at an end with a profession, certain members of which have taken great pains to demonstrate to the public the urgent necessity for a much stricter ecclesiastical discipline." Public meetings were held for the purpose of supporting Mr. Miall in applying to the Court of Exchequer for a new trial, and the motion was almost immediately brought before Chief Baron Pollock and Barons Parke, Alderson, and Rolfe by Sir Thomas Wilde. The judgment of Mr. Baron Parke was upheld on various and even conflicting grounds, and Mr. Miall was accordingly mulcted in heavy costs and excessive damages. The contest had been entered upon in the public interest, and the public generously indemnified the defendant from loss, and indeed took occasion to testify in the most enthusiastic terms their appreciation of his bold and uncompromising exposition of the principle of civil and religious liberty. The sum of 802*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* was raised, which exceeded by 177*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* the whole costs of the action, and this amount, together with an address engrossed on vellum, was presented to him at a public *soirée* held at the London Tavern. The speech in which my father acknowledged this testimonial was one of the most inspiring and eloquent of his many platform

addresses. The following passage, selected, however, rather to indicate the ruling purpose of the speaker than to illustrate his oratory, is not without interest even at this distance of time :—

“To Baron Parke’s *dictum* I believe I must consider myself mainly indebted for the honour of this evening. He did me the kindness, unintentionally I suspect, to convert what else would have been a mere private injustice into a public danger. The history of the law of libel affords many curious illustrations of wisdom and liberality, of judge-made law, but of Baron Parke in connection with this subject it may be said, ‘Many judges have done virtuously, but he has excelled them all.’ For some years past it may have been observed how, in reference to all ecclesiastical matters, the bench of ermine has leant with partiality to the bench of law. To give to law its narrowest interpretation wherever the rights of the subject have come into collision with the claims of the ‘clergy—to back the Church in the most unconstitutional of its demands, or when compelled to refuse them, to travel beyond the record with a view of suggesting how such demands might possibly be enforced—to bind yet faster upon the people rather than to relax the bonds of priestly domination—seem to me to have been objects towards which our law courts, and particularly that of the Exchequer, have perseveringly shaped their decisions. But the doctrine of Baron Parke strikes one to have been as cool, as daring, and as dangerous an encroachment upon constitutional liberty as judicial churchmanship ever yet perpetrated. I should be exceedingly sorry to let drop a single expression which could be interpreted to the disparagement of the Christian ministry. No man holds in profounder respect the office or its functions. The relations between a pastor and his flock I take to be one of the most intimate and consequently the most influential which can possibly subsist between man and man. But as the trust is the most weighty one, so is it peculiarly liable to be abused. The man

whose special duty it is to exhibit to those around him the sublime truths of Christianity, whose public engagements associate him in the minds of his hearers almost exclusively with that which comes from God, and who wields an instrumentality capable of touching and of swaying the deepest and most potent springs of human action, is likely enough, in the exercise of his functions, to acquire an ascendancy over others which, whenever turned to account by pride and selfishness, may seriously interfere with social peace. When in addition to social influence thus obtained, ecclesiastical mechanism creates an *esprit de corps* and a separate order, claiming especial reverence, taking a fixed and permanent position among their countrymen, the danger is indefinitely increased that each power, in the hands of human nature should be employed at times for purposes of class aggrandisement, threatening individual freedom both of thought and speech. But, ally this order with the State—link this organised influence by means of permanent endowments with civil government—a government too in which the aristocratic principle is predominant—and you construct an engine which, as all history testifies, is certain of being turned with disastrous effect against the peace, progress and liberty of the commonwealth. The State-priesthood of this country, furnishes no exception to the rule. So unremitting and so successful were its earlier efforts to fix a yoke of despotism upon the neck of the people that nothing but the stern determination of heroic puritanism saved us from wearing it at this very day. And if in modern times the Church is compelled to make ‘I dare not wait upon I would,’ if now clerical pretensions are well-nigh as impotent as they are monstrous, and arrogance must be content to embody itself in swelling words rather than impressive deeds, to what is the change owing but to the more enlightened and manly spirit of the age produced by the vigorous action of a free press?”

Mr. Gathercole was however not yet disposed of. He found new grounds of complaint in the speech




from which the above quotation is made, and, emboldened by his recent success, commenced another action for libel laying his damages at 5,000*l*. Beyond the notice, nothing further was heard of this renewal of hostilities, and very few public allusions were subsequently made to the subject.

The year 1847 was one of unusual agitation and activity amongst the leaders of the religious equality movement. Lord John Russell's government had been in office sufficiently long to warrant the suspicion as early as the close of 1846 that they were resolved upon an extension in this country of the power and authority of the State Church. This was none the less obvious to the minds of the more astute and intelligent members of the dissenting community on account of the ostentatious professions of respect and good will towards Nonconformists which the premier and some other members of his cabinet frequently proclaimed. My father, who was as sensitive to the changes of feeling and disposition entertained by politicians upon the State Church question as any general on the battle-field to a diversion or a change of tactics on the part of the enemy, adopted a tone of address both in the press and on the platform more akin to that of his earliest public appeals than to the somewhat more chastened and moderate language which had become almost habitual to him. Addressing himself to those Dissenters who held aloof from the Anti-State Church Association he wrote (*Nonconformist*, January 13th, 1847) :—

“ Do something for the sake of consistency, for  
“ your own character’s sake, for the sake of the Church  
“ of Christ ; do *something* to show you are in earnest—  
“ something that will tell more effectively in checking  
“ ecclesiastical encroachment, and settling religion upon  
“ its true basis, than is likely to be done by denouncing  
“ every movement of your own friends. Don’t stand  
“ stock still year after year merely to be shot at ! Take  
“ up some position at least which will not lay you open  
“ to these successive assaults ! Why should you be a  
“ bye-word of derision in the mouth of your rulers ?  
“ Is it in very deed come to this ; and must Dissenters  
“ meanly lick the hand that habitually smites them in  
“ the principles they profess to cherish ? ”

The immediate occasion of his apprehension of systematic encroachment by the Government on the liberties of the people were the minutes issued by the Committee of Council on Education. This manifesto, with other indications of a similar tendency in the policy of Lord John and his colleagues, brought my father into the arena of public controversy from which he had been almost withdrawn since the Southwark election. During the whole of December 1846, in company with his friend John Burnet, he visited the principal towns in the south of Scotland with the object of obtaining extended support to the Anti-State Church organisation. The effect of this campaign, eminently satisfactory as it was in relation to the developement of that Association and its plans, was invigorating to Mr. Miall alike in mind and body. Writing to his wife from Edinburgh on the 31st December, he says : “ We have attended sixteen

public meetings; each of us preached six times, travelled between eleven and twelve hundred miles, and met in private numerous parties, so that we have not had time to get tired. I hope you will find me none the worse for my labours, and I fancy that nothing in the shape of a winter, after what we have had during the past month, will have much effect upon me." Returning to London for a few weeks he again set out for Manchester, Liverpool, and other neighbouring towns on a similar errand. At the latter place the meeting was invaded by a gang of some 200 ship's carpenters who were hired by the Church party to disturb the proceedings. A scene of indescribable confusion was the result; but, writes my father, "it has done us a world of good." It was on this occasion that he challenged his opponents to select a champion to meet him in public discussion, and the invitation was accepted by the Rev. Joseph Baylee, a clergyman of Birkenhead, between whom and himself a spirited discussion, extending over two nights, was conducted a month later before an audience of about 2,000 persons in the concert hall. The debate was conducted in perfect order and fairness, Mr. Miall being highly complimented by his opponent's referee on the courtesy and moderation with which he stated his argument. It was an appeal from "Philip drunk to Philip sober," and the result amply verified my father's declaration that the disturbance, of which this was the outcome, had done "a world of good."



From letters written home during the above-mentioned visits to Scotland, and the North of England, a few extracts are given :—

*To MRS. MIALL.*

*BERWICK-ON-TWEED, December 9th, 1846.*

We commenced our campaign to-night at Berwick, the most cool-spirited town in Scotland on all public questions.<sup>1</sup> Our meeting was exceedingly crowded, and we got on very well considering that we had travelled from Newcastle, sixty-four miles, outside the coach. It was cold, but we much enjoyed the ride. . . . We have neither of us suffered any inconvenience, and our journeying now is nothing to speak of. I write this in the midst of a large company so that I cannot say more. . . .

*PORTOBELLO, December 10th, 1846.*

We are here within three miles of Edinburgh to hold a meeting this evening. We came from Berwick by the railway, about sixty miles, and a most interesting journey we had. We are now a few steps from the sea beach, and have just returned from a two hours' walk on the sands. I must not boast till the end of our tour, but I fancy I shall gain rather than lose health and strength as I go. Mr. Burnet is a capital companion, full of information, kindness, and talk. Until we get to Edinburgh we shall do little but nibble at the voluntary cause, the places at which we are commencing being either small or cold. Talking of cold, the wind is gloriously keen to-day, and braces me up to any amount of exertion. . . .

*EDINBURGH, December 12th, 1846.*

. . . . I write a line merely to keep up communication with you. I have nothing to say, save that I am quite well

<sup>1</sup> This is no longer true, thanks to Dr. Rutherford and others.—A. M.

such an outcry about Sabbath travelling invited me to dinner yesterday (Sunday), had hot fish, roast beef, champagne, and whisky, and then went to evening service and from it in cabs and omnibuses. So much for Scotch consistency.

PERTH, *December 27th, 1846.*

. . . . Our journey from Falkirk has been upon the turnpike road (about forty-five miles), and as it is Christmas time, and the coaches are overloaded, we have been obliged to content ourselves with outside places. The weather, however has been splendid, the sky clear, the air dry and bracing, and the roads not amiss. We have suffered, consequently, no inconvenience, and we have now fairly broken the neck of our work. We have but three more public meetings before us—Perth, Dundee, and Cupar—and on Friday we hope to start from Edinburgh by the early morning mail so as to reach home some time on Saturday.

EDINBORO', *December 31st, 1846.*

. . . . I need hardly say that we have got through our work, and we have done so without failing of a single appointment set down for us. We have attended sixteen public meetings, each of us preached six times, travelled between eleven and twelve hundred miles, and met in private numerous parties, so that we have not had time to get tired. I hope you will find me none the worse for my labours, and I fancy that nothing in the shape of a winter, after what we have had during the past month, will have much effect upon me.

It is rather indicative of my father's abounding energy at that time of his life that he found time during this tour to write to his eldest daughter, then about thirteen years of age.

KILMARNOCK, *December 23rd, 1846.*

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—I promised your mamma in my last note home that my next letter should be to you. I have not much time before me, but I wish to fulfil my promise. You want to know something of our Scottish tour. Get your map and follow me. Berwick-on-Tweed was our first town, a place very famous in the history of border warfare, for it was often taken and retaken by different parties, and was more than once burnt to the ground. A small part of the old castle still remains. From Berwick our road lay along the east coast to Dunbar, Haddington, and Musselburgh—the road by which the English kings used to advance into Scotland when they invaded that country. We passed over several battle-fields—Brayburn, where Oliver Cromwell beat the Scotch Presbyterians, and Prestonpans, where Colonel Gardiner was killed. At Musselburgh we went over a bridge, still in very good preservation, which was built by the Romans when they had possession of the country. Edinburgh, where we next arrived, has too many “lions” to be described in a short note, the principal of which is a very lofty hill which overlooks the whole city, the summit of which is just like a couching lion. The castle, the old house of John Knox the Reformer, and the palace of Holyrood, where Rizzio the favourite of Mary Queen of Scots was murdered, are all here. The city is divided into two, one called the “Auld Town,” the other the “New Town.” The first is very ancient, the streets narrow and dirty. The last is modern, with wide, handsome streets and splendid public buildings. After leaving Edinburgh we visited Glasgow, a very large, populous, and thriving commercial city on the banks of the Clyde. There is nothing to be seen here but smoke and dirt, except what is called the High Church, which was the cathedral before the Reformation, and the cemetery, which is on the side of a steep hill or rock, and which, being laid out in terraces, planted with trees and studded all over with funeral monuments, is a very striking object. We went on Monday to Greenock, a sort of

port on the mouth of the Clyde, famous for sugar refining, iron works, and shipbuilding. On Tuesday to Paisley, where we saw the process of making shawls, and to-day we have got safe and well to Kilmarnock. To-morrow we return through Glasgow to Falkirk, Friday to Stirling, Saturday to Perth, Tuesday to Dundee, Wednesday to Cupar Fife, where we finish our work, and if all be well we shall be home again some time on Saturday January 2nd.

Tell your dear mamma that I am in excellent health and in good spirits, but that I begin to long for the quiet of home. We have succeeded pretty well in our work, and do not regret having come to Scotland even in the depth of the winter for so good a cause as that of the British Anti-State Church Association.

Give my hearty love to your sisters, and assure yourself and them that nothing will more delight me, nothing will more conduce to your own happiness, than giving your heart to God by Jesus Christ. Adieu now, my beloved daughter, and receive the affectionate remembrances of

Your dear parent,  
EDWD. MIALL.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### JOURNEYS UNDERTAKEN IN AID OF RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AND PEACE PRINCIPLES.

1847—1848.

The British Anti-State Church Association and the General Election—  
Mr. Miall a Candidate for Halifax—Defeated by a Split in the Party  
—The Whig Policy of Levelling-up—Increased Activity of the  
Anti-State Church Association—Tours through Lancashire and  
Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland and South Wales—Letters  
to Mrs. Miall from the latter District—Letter to his Eldest Daughter  
—The French Revolution—Resistance to War Spirit of the Govern-  
ment—Visit to Lamartine in Paris—Mr. Miall's Views on the Events  
of 1848 on the Continent and in Ireland—"Coercion and Concession."

At the general election of 1847 Mr. Miall was invited to become a candidate for the representation of Halifax. The electoral policy of the Nonconformists, which he had for three or four years past largely helped to determine, began now to bear fruit. Barely two years had elapsed since the Anti-State-Church Association had set out, Diogenes-like, to search for six men, fully instructed and equipped, who should give expression in Parliament to the views of the Association. More than five times that number were now put in nomination.

The prospect at Halifax was encouraging from the



first, and as the time of polling approached success was deemed certain. There were five candidates for the two seats, one of whom—Mr. Protheroe, the recently sitting member in the Liberal interest—withdrawed. Mr. Miall was in the town for three weeks, addressing public meetings and making a personal canvass of the electors. The relations between the candidate and his supporters were somewhat unusual.

“There is much about this contest,” he writes to his wife, “that gratifies me. All parties are mutually courteous. Not a whisper of personality is breathed. My committee is composed almost wholly of religious men, who make every day’s work a matter of prayer. I have had much talk with the different electors almost wholly upon spiritual subjects. Many of them are startled by my views, but see enough of reason and truth in them to make their surprise a not displeasing one. In short, the contest is a most novel and extraordinary one, and compels respect from all quarters. Our committee room is at a private house; we have no colours—we go to no expense. Every one works gratuitously. We meet every evening to sum up results; and if pure motives, thorough earnestness, good organisation, and minute attention to details can carry me, I shall be safe enough.”

A fortnight later he writes :—

“There is now no doubt of a coalition between Whig and Tory, and it is thus far working in our favour, that several who had promised their votes to Wood” (then Sir Charles Wood and afterwards (?) Lord Halifax) “in connection with me will now withhold them, and several who would not give me their second vote will now do so. . . . I believe there is little probability that we can be beaten. At the same

"time since electioneering matters are proverbially uncertain, "I hope you will not imagine that if ultimately defeated "I shall regret the time or the labour I have spent at "Halifax. The struggle is a noble one and for a glorious "cause. The seeds of truth are being sown and are quicken- "ing, and if *I* should be excluded from Parliament just now "I shall not regret it personally, and shall conclude most "assuredly that my time is not yet come."

A glimpse of home comes in where it might be least expected. In this letter to Mrs. Miall he adds:—

"I think it will be better to send Edward<sup>1</sup> to school on "Monday, although I shall not be at home to give him his "dismissal. The girls, as I said before, may await my return. "You will be surprised to see me nowise worse for my work "—looking perhaps both browner, fatter, and stronger than "when I started. Home will be sweet to me, whether I "return plain E. Miall or E. Miall, M.P. . . . I long to be "with you again, but am obliged, that I may do my work "cheerfully, to think as little of home as I can manage."

The result of the polling was a reversal of his expectations and his friends' predictions. The Whig Minister and the Tory candidate ran together, and though my father obtained 328 Liberal votes out of a total of 625, the Tory votes were given to Sir Charles Wood to the number of 171, and made his seat secure. The Whigs returned the compliment by giving 222 votes to Mr. Edwards,<sup>2</sup> and the victory

<sup>1</sup> Now in Ottawa, Canada, Chief Commissioner of Inland Revenue.

<sup>2</sup> This gentleman, who came in at the top of the poll, was unable to make a speech when his friends presented a requisition to him, and entertained them with a song, "Hearts of Oak."

was thus shared equally between "Tweedledum" and "Tweedledee." Ernest Jones, the well-known Chartist barrister, was also a candidate, and the numbers stood—

Edwards . . . . .	509
Wood . . . . .	506
Miall . . . . .	349
Jones . . . . .	281

The Nonconformists were successful, however, in the return of many of the candidates they put forward at this election, and they were able to reckon in the new Parliament more than sixty members pledged to oppose all measures for the extension of the principle of State endowments of religion, and no less than twenty-six Anti-State-Churchmen.

"Well done," writes Mr. Miall, "ay, right nobly done, fellow Nonconformists throughout the kingdom. . . . The ice is broken. The charm is dissolved. The spell which sealed the eyes and paralysed the will of the Nonconformist body is dissipated. They have had a taste of independence, and they will never again forget it. Mark the child after it has once run alone! How eager, after having thus felt his feet, to exercise them once more and yet once more, and still in spite of many falls, once more! Dissenters have felt their feet, and have made their first attempt, a not unsuccessful one, to run alone. . . . We have stood forth to vindicate our principles, and in doing so we have redeemed our own reputation, and won for ourselves a title to public respect."

The new parliament and the premier had not long made acquaintance before it was seen that the latter

had fully made up his mind to follow the lines of ecclesiastical policy which his Government laid down in the last session of the old parliament. Although again and again Lord John had made the most explicit declarations in favour of religious liberty, and had so far made good his professions as to introduce, both in this and in a former administration, measures of relief for the behoof of those who could not conform to the Church of England, he began now to show unmistakably that "his game was made" for "levelling up." "The noble lord deals with great truths," wrote my father, "as men do with candles. When he wants them he lights them, and goes in search of what he requires; which done, he retires again to his dormitory, blows out the light, and settles himself once more to sleep."<sup>1</sup>

More and more clear did it become in the session of 1848, that the great object of the Whig Ministry was to keep in office. To insure this they were ready and even eager to make a firm alliance with the preponderating Church authorities in England and Ireland, viz., the Church of England and the Irish Roman Catholics. A man of less earnestness and devout feeling than my father might have considered that he had "delivered his soul" in relation to the Whig policy, when he had persistently assailed it and exposed it by his writings week after week, but it was far otherwise with him. The machinations of the Government were in his ears a renewed trumpet-call

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. viii. p. 185.

to the battle. Nothing but sustained eagerness to grapple with the evil principle of State interference in matters of religion could have urged him to the course which he pursued, alternately writing articles characterised no less by force and passion than by directness of aim and cogency of argument, and employing his well-earned intervals of respite by planning the campaign of the Anti-State Church Association, and leading their forces repeatedly on the field of action. True it is that few men have ever been more nobly sustained and recruited by those of kindred spirit. Every week he met in council such men as Dr. Thomas Price, Charles Stovel, John Burnet, John Howard Hinton, Charles Gilpin, Dr. Hutton, to whom was added in 1848 J. Carvell Williams, names dear to Nonconformists who know anything of their own history. Their work was directed to the dissemination of knowledge in relation to the object of all their hopes and efforts throughout the country. My father took an active part both in planning and in carrying out these expeditions. In the autumn of 1847 he is found at Northampton, Leeds, Bradford, York, Beverley, Hull, Wakefield (where a challenge to public discussion with a clergyman was accepted), Dewsbury, Doncaster, Scarborough, Newcastle, and other towns in Durham and Northumberland. A month or two later, besides attending meetings in the home counties, he revisited Manchester and Liverpool, where crowded and enthusiastic assemblies met. Throughout the year 1848

numerous metropolitan meetings, both in connection with the State Church question and that of reform were attended, and the autumn found him making the tour of a dozen of the principal towns in South Wales, pursuing the same object.

Some of the letters written to his wife from the latter district increase the interest of the narrative :—

PONTYPOOL, *October 12th, 1848.*

Here I am, in good health and sound spirits, perched up among the mountains of Monmouthshire, in a theological college which commands from every side of it but one a most romantic prospect. Walking up and down in front of this neat and respectable building, with a bright sky overhead, and well-wooded mountains right before me, I have spent the morning in reading the *Noncon.*, which I received by post together with a letter from Frank Crossley, touching the probabilities of an election at Halifax. C—— seems to think there is no chance of the vacation of his seat by Sir C. Wood, for the purpose of going to the West Riding; the Halifax people, however, wish me to hold myself in readiness. There is no occasion, however, for hurry, as an election will not, under any circumstances, take place for another month to come.

I arrived here yesterday afternoon, in a hired open carriage from Newport. The ride, ten miles, was an interesting one. I met a large public meeting last night, and I imagine that my address (for I was in a happy cue) gave considerable satisfaction, the meeting having requested me to address them again to-night, which (owing to circumstances at Abergavenny, which will prevent my holding a meeting there), would otherwise have been vacant. I consented to this arrangement, but informed the people that I should turn the second meeting to some pecuniary account. . . .

I earnestly hope that my visit to these parts will be very useful, and serve to bring a numerous and somewhat enthusiastic class of people within the range of the Association. Hitherto matters have proceeded much more hopefully than I had anticipated, and I begin confidently to expect that I shall be able to give in a good report to the Executive Committee on my return.

I hope you will not worry yourself during my absence, and will find repose in the goodness of God, the best preservative of peace and cheerfulness. . . .

CARMARTHEN, *October 15th, 1848.*

There being no English service in this town, except at the church and at the Wesleyan Methodists, I am left at home alone, and a short portion of the quiet thus left at my disposal, I think I may fairly devote to converse with my wife. I reached this town yesterday, between one and two o'clock, by mail from Brecon, fifty-two miles, where I got your note and Ted's, and spent the evening in writing for the *Noncon.* I am staying at the house of a Baptist minister, and very comfortable he and his wife make me. . . . I am to preach for the Association this afternoon, and I have promised to give Mr. Jones's people a short discourse in the evening, which he is afterwards to repeat in Welsh. To-morrow evening we hold our public meeting, and on Tuesday I go forward to Haverfordwest, where I shall remain till Thursday morning, and then go on to Cardigan. . . . The scenery through which I travelled yesterday was very various, much of it very magnificent. The day was fine, and the autumnal tints came out in full splendour. Inside the coach with me was a newly married couple, who hesitated not to bill and coo in my presence. This of course was specially interesting to me, but the youngsters, bating this rather natural deviation from propriety, were intelligent and polite.

I appear to have completely recovered tone from change of air and scene, and certainly I never spoke before the public

with more satisfaction to myself, or more apparent interest to my auditors. If the week on which I have entered should be as that which is gone, I shall have cause for thankfulness that I consented to come into South Wales.

Thus far, then, God has prospered me, and, I hope, the cause for which I labour. Trust in His kindness and faithfulness is surely due, as well on account of our daily experience of them, as of our knowledge of His character and designs. . . .

Let us both be grateful for what is given to us undeservedly—and cheerfully acquiesce in what is withheld—and we have abundant reason to “thank God and take courage.” . . . .

HAVERFORDWEST, *October 18th, 1848.*

. . . . We had a famous meeting here last night, and as I am not going to Cardigan to-morrow, as was originally arranged, I have consented to have a meeting to-night at Milford Haven. On Thursday I shall be free from any public engagement, and intend, if possible, getting back to Carmarthen. . . .

CARMARTHEN, *October 20th.*

I go to Llanelly this afternoon by mail, about eighteen miles, and hold there my last meeting for this week. I remain in good health and spirits, and am hopeful of fully accomplishing my purpose. The weather to-day is splendid.

At Milford Haven on Wednesday night we had a glorious sight of aurora borealis, such as I have never witnessed in my life. Along the line of the horizon lay dark black clouds like a range of mountains, and along their tops coruscations of lightning played most brilliantly. Upwards from behind the clouds shot a full blaze of light, just like the rays of the sun, as they are sometimes seen bursting through an opening in the clouds, and towards the meridian the light assumed a deep crimson, or blood-red colour, through which the stars



shone most distinctly. This splendid phenomenon lasted for three or four hours, and completely lighted our way home after the meeting. . . .

To-morrow I shall arrive at Swansea, to preach on Sunday, and hold a public meeting on Monday. Tuesday is left free for me, that I may sniff the sea-breezes without molestation. On Wednesday night I am to be at Cardiff, and attend a breakfast meeting on Thursday morning, immediately after which I shall cross the Severn for Bristol, and, if possible, get home that night. About this, however, I am as yet uncertain. How glad I shall be to get home again you cannot think. Yet everything has gone pleasantly and prosperously with me in my journey.

I have now nearly closed my second week, and have before me but comparatively little labour. The neck of the tour has been broken, and what remains is easy. I hope I shall be favoured with a continuance of this weather to the end.

The following, indited to his eldest daughter when at boarding-school, was written a few weeks previously to the above :—

11, TUFNELL PARK, HOLLOWAY,  
*September 18th, 1848.*

MY DEAREST DAUGHTER LOU,—Another birthday of yours comes to remind me that I, as well as you, am growing older. To-morrow you will be fifteen, just that age from which, as from a hill-top, you see outspread before you the region of womanhood. In the distance I daresay it presents itself to you, clothed with many charms—bright, cheerful, and attractive—smiling as a summer morning, waiting only to be entered upon in order to yield you its abundance of rich enjoyments. Perhaps your busy mind has already sketched the outline of your future plans, and you are beginning, in anticipation, to weigh your pleasures on the one hand against your responsibilities on the other.

I see no good end to be gained by abruptly putting an

end to dreams that must and will be dreamed, but perhaps a little sober warning from your papa, who loves you dearly, will not be mistimed nor useless. My experience, then, my beloved girl, has taught me, as I suppose most people's have, that all things seen in the future, by the eye of our imagination, and through the medium of our affections, are greatly magnified, and often very much distorted. The pleasing looks far more pleasing than it is, the painful far more painful.

Both lights and shades in the picture are exaggerated. I do not ask you to avert your eye from either; it would be asking you to fight against nature. But it may be useful for you to understand that solid and substantial satisfaction in life is to be gained not by building air-castles, nor by impatiently sweeping with the glass of hope the horizon of the future; but by doing every day what the day requires, and leaving the morrow to its own care and enjoyments. This requires confidence in God, and love to Him; trust in His goodness and gratitude for His favours. And these dispositions of heart I trust you will diligently and prayerfully cultivate. "Many happy returns to you," my girl. To me your birthdays seem to follow each other rapidly enough. May God give you health to pursue your studies, and His grace to consecrate the fruits of them all to Him! Your mamma and I are thankful for every proof of your good conduct, and our best wish for you is, that you may be a useful and a happy Christian.


We have united in presenting you with a writing-desk, as our parental memorial of the day, which you will have when you come home on Thursday.

Meanwhile, accept my love, give it likewise to Emily, and remember me kindly to M. A—— and to the Misses W——.

I am, my dear Child,

Yours very affectionately,

EDWD. MIALL.



The French Revolution necessarily claimed much of his thought in the early part of 1848. As a journalist he never wrote with insufficient information, or with a faltering purpose, and the columns of the *Nonconformist* during a series of thirty-eight years contain a record, which it is given to few to leave behind them, of undeviating consistency in pointing out the application of principles of truth and justice to public affairs at home and abroad. It pleased our Government to see in the revolutionary experience of France a menace to the peace of this country, and they proposed additional army, navy, and ordnance estimates of some half a million sterling. My father spared himself no pains to expose and resist their folly. Speaking at the Hall of Commerce in Threadneedle Street where a popular demonstration against the war spirit of the Government was held, he said: "The Whigs are most  
"anxious that the dignity of our institutions should  
"be maintained, and consequently have attempted  
"to raise and perpetuate the income tax. Now they  
"had better have eaten off their own fingers than  
"thus to have stung the middle classes of society.  
"They have just planted a blow where there is power  
"to return it. . . . If after a commercial crisis such  
"as this country has passed through, there is a positive increase of taxation, what are you to expect  
"when the affairs of the country are prosperous,  
"under these same Whigs? We must tell this  
"Ministry that the nation sees through the sham

“and the cheat attempted to be put upon them, that we will bear this taxation no longer, and that we will have a cheap government.” So strong and unanimous was the expressed feeling of the country that the Chancellor of the Exchequer beat a hasty retreat and abandoned his plan of an increase in the income tax. But that was an insignificant concession; the additional war estimates were insisted on, and the spirit of the working classes, already sufficiently roused by oppression, and by the spirit of revolution abroad, became turbulent. “The triumph of the Ministry,” wrote a provincial editor, “is celebrated on the brink of a social volcano, and the time is not far distant when the only alternative for them will be humble concession or ignominious downfall.” For a short time Chartism appeared dangerous. Numerous riots occurred, resulting occasionally in conflicts with the police and loss of life. All apprehension of danger, however, disappeared with the monster procession to Kennington Common which dispersed peaceably.

The “provisional (Republican) Government” in France raised great hopes amongst the party of progress in England. M. de Lamartine, the “Minister for Foreign Affairs,” received a deputation from the meeting in London already referred to, amongst whom were Mr. Joseph Sturge and Mr. Miall. They had a very cordial reception. Writing from Paris to his wife, Mr. Miall said: “Lamartine addressing us in reply spoke with great dignity, energy, and

“feeling. General Condorces O'Connor introduced us. Lamartine said that the fall of royalty in France had carried with it all the prejudices which the French people had entertained towards the English. Our interview lasted about half an hour.” A fuller account of this visit was given in the *Nonconformist*, from which the following extract is made. The letter goes on to express the hopes which the writer felt as to the success of this great experiment—hopes which, alas! were followed in a few months by disappointment and dismay.

“We started about three o'clock for the Hôtel de Ville in two carriages. Messrs. O'Connor, Sturge, and Alexander in the first, Messrs. Bradshaw, Norris, and Miall in the second. The *Place* before the Hôtel was occupied by crowds of loiterers and *ouvriers*, who, however, courteously made way for us. As we ascended the grand staircase, we saw some signs of republican simplicity which some of our aristocrats might have looked upon with a sneer. On the first landing stood a national guard, with his musket shouldered and his bayonet fixed, in the dress of a workman, a burnished smock-frock, a ‘shocking bad hat,’ and a face and hands quite innocent of soap and water. On the top landing were some others in uniform, playing cards, and actually smoking. The first ante-chamber was crowded. Two or three separate deputations, and amongst them that of the English residents, were there, waiting their turn for admission to the presence of the Provisional Government. As a mark of distinction, however, we were taken first. The folding-doors were thrown open, and the residents and ourselves entered a second ante-chamber—then, other doors were opened, and we passed into an apartment, gorgeously furnished, in which stood the Ministry. I recognised Lamartine instantly. He has the stamp of the

poet on his countenance, and his air is that of a perfect gentleman. Cremieux was there, but he soon retired to another part of the chamber. Louis Blanc struck one as a boy; he is very short of stature, and juvenile in his countenance. Marast, Mayor of Paris, was present; and Flocon.

"After salutation, General O'Connor explained the circumstances out of which had arisen this visit of congratulation. By the request of Lamartine, Mr. Joseph Sturge read, with emphasis, the address which you have already inserted. I watched its effect upon Lamartine and Marast. Both seemed to understand it well, to catch its points, and to appreciate its spirit. They were evidently much gratified. At the conclusion of the reading, Lamartine addressed us in French. The fluency of his language, and the grace of his oratory greatly struck me. You will have already inserted a translation of his speech, so that I need not give it here. So far as one could judge from the manner, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs was quite in earnest, and peace with England appears to be an object with him of sincere desire. I was not surprised at this, so far as he is concerned. His wife is an English lady, and he has many sympathies with England. But I did not anticipate from Marast, the late editor of the *National*, so marked a concurrence in pacific sentiments. His eyes glistened at some parts of the address, and he nodded approval so apparently sincere and pleasurable that I would fain hope his anti-Anglican *furor* has vanished for ever. I was sorry to notice that all the ministers, but especially Lamartine, looked worn and jaded with incessant work."

France was not the only European country in which a revolutionary spirit was at work during this year of 1848. It may not be out of place here to reproduce my father's *résumé* of the events that had occurred on the Continent since the year opened—

"The year 1848 commenced ominously. A low but universal murmur disclosed a larger amount than usual of distress and discontent. On the part of peoples, there might be observed indications of a not distant giving way of quiet endurance. On the part of governments, an infatuated determination to test their power to the utmost. Great Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Prussia, all had been placed by their rulers in a position of difficulty, from which there appeared to be no way of escape, but through the agency of some great convulsion. To burdens under which they were already reeling those in authority were contemplating the addition of others. Misgovernment, unsuccessfully resisted, had grown to be utterly reckless. Tyranny had even ceased to wear a mask. The earnest whispers of prudence were not only unheeded but denounced. Reform seemed impossible. However startling the events which subsequently occurred, we can now look back upon them as the necessary effects of then existing causes. Even before their occurrence, we pointed out to our readers what appeared to us to herald, at no remote distance of time, an European explosion. Yet, even then, it came upon us by surprise. The fall; and flight of Louis Philippe; the triumph of the Berlin populace over Frederick William; the success of insurrection, and the overthrow of Prince Metternich at Vienna; the rapid transformation of the smaller German states; the expulsion of Austrians from Milan, after a six days' contest; the concession of a representative constitution to Sardinia and the Papal States; the revolt of Sicily; the struggle at Naples; constituted a chain of events of which each link was so important, and so unexpected, that for a time it seemed as though the very foundations upon which society rests had given way, and kingcraft and priestcraft were to be banished from the world for ever."<sup>1</sup>

In England the same forces were in conflict, but

<sup>1</sup> Article in *Nonconformist*—last number for 1848.

the result was vastly different. The grievances of the people were not only expressed freely, but there was a large and intelligent class of the community engaged in discussing them with a degree of earnestness and sympathetic feeling that could not be misunderstood. The power of the physical force Chartists was broken by the patient and strenuous exertions of law-abiding reformers, and among these none were more influential in disarming hostility than the political Dissenters, and the leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law movement. "English Chartism," writes McCarthy, "died of publicity; of exposure to the air; of the Anti-Corn-Law League; of the evident tendency of the time to settle all questions by reason, argument, and majorities; of growing education; of a strengthening sense of duty among all the more influential classes."<sup>1</sup>

In Ireland disaffection broke out in open rebellion and sedition. Here there were no counteracting influences. O'Connell had made his peace with the Government after his imprisonment, ceasing to agitate for Irish independence in consideration of State support of the Roman Catholic priesthood and educational institutions, but O'Connell was dead, and Ireland, tormented by the potato famine and roused by priests and demagogues, was in no mood to be conciliated. The Russell administration had no other policy than that of bribery and coercion. "The endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland,"

<sup>1</sup> McCarthy's *History of Our Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 17.



said my father, speaking at Kennington, "I take to be nothing more than a pure, unadulterated hoax upon the British public. Its profession is one thing, its intention is another. On its front is written 'Justice to Ireland'; in its heart you will see 'Maintenance of Aristocratic Institutions.'"

Writing on the same subject he says:—

"Coercion and concession have followed each other with singular regularity, and the violence of the first seems always to furnish a proportion for the costly mischievousness of the last. Poor Ireland suffers injury from both, but it is questionable whether what is tossed to her as a boon does not more seriously impede her recovery of constitutional health, than the most stringent measures of repression. Last session of Parliament Ireland was under the rod, which, we need hardly remind our readers, was wielded with a sincerity of harshness seldom exceeded. Next session she is to have sweetmeats, and they are to be given to her with unstinting prodigality, in the vain hope of quieting her restlessness by cloying her stomach. Now we have an instinctive sympathy for a conciliatory policy. This country, we are forward to admit, owes a large measure of justice to Ireland. Real kindness will never find in us an obstacle to its exercise. But a blind, because uninquiring, indulgence of benevolent intentions, is frequently more harmful than downright cruelty, and whilst unnecessary rigour has slain its thousands, weak and unprincipled concession has slain its myriads."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. viii. p. 866.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE.

1849—1851.

Mr. Miall's public course recognised and commended by his London friends—Revisits Scotland—A "Strolling Agitator"—Speech at the Paris Congress—Secession of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel from the Church of England—Imprisonment of Rev. James Shore—The Anti-State-Church Association recruited by Clergymen—Mr. Miall's motto, "Onward, onward, onward!"—*The British Churches in Relation to the British People*—Reply to Dr. Campbell's Strictures—Second Triennial Conference of the Anti-State-Church Association—Admonitory tone of Mr. Miall's Speech—Letters to Mrs. Miall—To Mr. J. M. Webb, Jun.—The Papal Assumptions—Mr. Miall moving an Amendment at a "No Popery" Meeting—"Easy" Descent from the Platform—Criticism of Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

At a meeting of my father's most ardent supporters, held at the London Tavern under the presidency of Mr. Samuel Morley early in 1849, the following sentiments were spoken to :—

I. An enlightened public opinion, the best safeguard against despotism on the one hand and revolution on the other.

II. Manhood suffrage, unfettered in its exercise, the shortest road to the removal of national grievances, the development of national resources, and the attainment of national prosperity.

III. The separation of Church and State the only mode of securing the freedom, efficiency, and honour of both.

IV. An honest and free press, and the *Nonconformist* as one of the best types both of its honesty and its freedom.

Nothing could better indicate the character of my father's public work as it at that time presented itself to those who watched his course ; and it was because he pursued these objects with undeviating consistency that he attracted to himself a band of trusty friends, who not only took their part in the work requiring to be done, but were ever ready to give such public demonstrations of their approval as would be at once a reward for the past and a stimulant for the future. It was on such occasions as these that the individual was seen behind the vague personality of the "editor." Mr. Miall seldom indulged in a strain which could be characterised as egotistic, but it was gratifying no less to his audience than to himself that he should throw off in the presence of his more intimate and sympathising friends the reserve that was habitual to him, showing them something of the motives and emotions that were secretly animating him. There were times when he felt that he had to fight his battle almost alone, but more frequently was he sustained and even urged forward by manifestations of generous enthusiasm of this nature. The contrast of feeling experienced under these varied conditions is best given in his own words :—

"None can tell the dreary prospect that was

“before me,” he says,<sup>1</sup> “when I came to this metropolis with the enterprise in my heart and in my head of establishing an organ for the reflection and expression of great principles of moral, political, and ecclesiastical truth ; none can tell the anxiety that was produced in my heart by the uncertainty of the issue. None can tell the shrinking of one’s soul from the difficulties, unpleasantnesses, and annoyances which one foresaw he must go through in order to anything like victory. . . . In general my purpose was misunderstood. I did not feel surprised : it was the common lot of those who had struck out a new path—a new practical path—and had left behind the ordinary conventionalisms, at all events religious conventionalisms of society. . . . And now, what a change ! I scarce know where I am. Although I had occasionally dreamt of these things in my imagination yet I can sometimes hardly realise to myself the position in which I have been placed. I look back and marvel. I look forward and hope.”

Until his election to Parliament in 1852 as the representative for Rochdale Mr. Miall continued to devote himself to his editorial labours and to the work of “agitation.” To catalogue his journeys undertaken for public objects would be both a profitless and tedious task. In the spring of 1849 and again in 1851 we find him visiting Scotland for the purpose of forming an extended constituency for the Anti-State Church Association. In Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen a warm welcome was given to him. Throughout 1849, 1850, and 1851,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Nonconformist *soirée*, *Nonconformist*, vol. ix. p. 182.

as if necessity were laid upon him, scarcely a month passed without its programme of meetings either in the metropolis or in the provinces, north, south, east, and west. "I present myself before you," he said to an audience at Birmingham, "this evening as a "strolling agitator—so designated by those who "take a lively interest in the object I am seeking "to promote. I have always professed to like "agitation. Agitation is opposed to stagnation in "all matters affecting mind and morals. I like to "see truth stirred up, and he who has the truth to "tell to his fellow men—a truth which he identifies "with their interests spiritual and temporal, is guilty "of a neglect of duty, if it lies within his reach, "unless he tells that truth to as many as he can "make to hear his voice."

Although chiefly identified in his public appearances with the work of the Anti-State Church Association, there were other movements that commanded his warmest sympathy, and to which he gave what impetus he could both by tongue and pen. Among these were Cobden's efforts to obtain legislative sanction to the principle of arbitration instead of war, Parliamentary Reform Organisations, the Society for Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, and others of a like kind. At Paris in 1849 and Frankfort in 1850 he was among those who spoke in favour of international peace. If war was in his heart it was not of a kind to scandalise his peace-loving friends:—

"Man may be endowed," he said at the Paris Congress, "and largely endowed, with a propensity which we have chosen to call combativeness, but which in its original elements was nothing more than a desire to overcome resistance. It was not necessary that this desire should gratify itself by having recourse to arms. It might gratify itself by moral as well as physical means. It might find expression and indulgence in conquering the difficulties which lay in the path of philanthropy and religion. War was simply a perversion of this natural impulse of humanity. Destroy war and the passion flows into its legitimate channel. For himself he had no doubt about the attainment of their object. They had a principle of eternal and immutable truth to stand upon, and on such a principle once ascertained he for one would rather plant his feet, even if he felt the whole world sinking beneath them, than join in the temporary shout of triumph with those who embraced a falsehood. . . . We have met here from all parts of the world," he continued, "as brothers, and spite of all resistance we will make all nations brothers before we abandon our enterprise."

Among the most noteworthy incidents in the ecclesiastical history of this time were the secession from the Establishment of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, and the inhibition and subsequent imprisonment of the Rev. James Shore. These events produced consternation in the minds of Churchmen, and seemed likely to be followed by a considerable exodus of the clergy from a position which was confessedly illogical and morally debasing. The first edition of Mr. Noel's *Essay on Church and State*, a volume of several hundred pages, was bought up on

the day of its publication and eagerly read. This evangelical and sober-minded Christian minister, a voluntary seceder from the State Church, referred to the State-endowed clergy in terms which would have been condemned as grossly exaggerated and unfair if they had been employed by a "political" Dissenter :—

"What are the pastors of the Anglican Churches in fact ? I grieve to write it. There are men among them of great virtues to whom I gladly do homage. I know and love many energetic, faithful, and sincere servants of Christ ; but when these exceptions are subtracted what are the rest ? I grieve to write it. Chosen by peers and squires ; by colleges and church corporations ; by chancellors and State-made prelates ; many are made pastors by a corrupt favouritism ; many are allured to an uncongenial employment by the income which it offers them ; and many embrace the profession of a pastor, because they are too dull, inert, or timid for any other. *They have scarcely any theological training ; they are pledged to all the errors in the Prayer-book, and all the abuses sanctioned by the Union ; they dread reforms ; they are servile to patrons, they are intolerant to Dissenters ; their zeal is crippled by State restrictions, and their indolence tempted by unbounded liberty to indulge it. Severed from the body of the people by their birth, by their early education, by their college life, by their aristocratical connections, by their zeal for their ecclesiastical prerogatives ; they have little popular influence. Lawyers, men of science, and editors of newspapers do not listen to them ; Chartists and Socialists dislike and despise them ; they scarcely touch the operative millions ; they make few converts among the devotees of fashion, and under their leadership the Christian army is inert, timid, and unsuccessful.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on the Union of Church and State.* By Rev. Baptist Noel.

The case of Mr. Shore was even more strongly illustrative of the evils of the State Church system. Mr. Baptist Noel gave up his position of privilege and attached himself to another community, exchanging the pulpit of the Church of England for that of a Baptist Church, and from that standpoint he was free to deliver his message as it pleased him. Mr. Shore was by a legal quibble committed to prison and kept there for two months, in default of paying the costs of a suit by the Bishop of Exeter, to restrain him from preaching the gospel according to his own understanding and conviction of it. He wished to become a Dissenter, and was forcibly held to the communion of the Church of England because he had preached as a Dissenter in the diocese of Exeter, before he had purged himself from the offence of contempt of court, by promising on oath never to preach again!<sup>1</sup> With these scandals fresh in their minds it was not to be wondered at if the Committee of the Anti-State Church Association saw their opportunity, and executed a flank movement against the forces of the Establishment. At their annual meeting in May, 1849, two clergymen, the Rev. Thomas Spencer and the Rev. G. H. Stoddart appeared on their

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Shore's evangelical views were not to the taste of Bishop Philpotts. The Bishop's examining chaplain, Mr. Maskell, was more to his mind. This enlightened cleric was so anxious to have everything arranged according to the most approved ecclesiastical pattern that he seriously propounded from the pulpit a theory that the thief on the cross was baptized by the water which flowed from the Redeemer's side when he was pierced : otherwise he could not have been saved.



platform and advocated the principles of the Association with a force which was well-nigh irresistible ; certainly upon a meeting of persons already convinced the effect of their declarations was to the last degree exhilarating and inspiring. Mr. Miall himself in following them, declared that he had listened to their speeches with profoundest delight, and with emotions that he dared not permit himself to express. If the members of that Association had needed to be re-inspired and quickened, an adequate motive to renewed efforts was supplied in the consideration of the facts and arguments presented to them at this annual gathering. One can scarcely complain of optimism where it is accompanied by an enthusiastic devotion to the furtherance of a high object believed to be speedily attainable, and surely no one had a better right than Mr. Miall to address such words as these to the large audience then before him :—

“ I can but look back upon the time when we first engaged in this great enterprise, and when the feelings of society generally were those of indignation and scorn at the presumption and folly of those who would undertake so great a work. We have already gone on, caring neither for the noises that assailed us discordantly on the one side or on the other ; we have had our objects simply and clearly before us. We have taken towards that object the nearest roads we could ascertain ; we have advanced thus far ; there are helpers coming from every quarter, some seceding from the Church, some working in the Church. We give to all of them the right hand of fellowship, and bid them God speed. But our motto is Onward,

onward, onward ! We dare not retreat, for we should then be unfaithful to our convictions. We will not give up because we have already pledged ourselves to the principles that we hold to be dearer to us than life ! and we cannot but succeed, for He who has all power in His hand, and who rules over all the hearts of the children of men, has promised that His Church shall one day arise and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments, and loose herself from the bonds of her neck. We earnestly and fervently pray for the advent of this glorious period ; and though our own eyes may be sealed in death ere we behold the great and glorious consummation, we have this strong conviction burning in our own bosoms, lighting up to enthusiasm whenever we meditate upon it—that we are indeed engaged in a work to which Omnipotence itself is pledged, and that as surely as there is a God in heaven, the Church shall one day be free.”

In the latter part of 1848, and the beginning of 1849, the correspondence columns of the *Nonconformist* were devoted to a subject which has more recently attracted the attention of religious writers of all parties in the Church, viz., the comparative inaptness and impotency of existing religious institutions to influence the minds of the working classes of this country. In offering some reflections of his own upon the subject, Mr. Miall showed himself no less sensible of the shortcomings of the free Churches than of the evils inherent in the State Church system.

“ British Christianity,” he wrote, “ is essentially “ the Christianity developed by a middle-class soil.

“ And, as such, its vitality is becoming impaired—its  
“ power sensibly decays. . . . It is fast degenerating  
“ among them from a living power to a lifeless form  
“ —from a principle to a sentiment—from an inward  
“ motive to an outward profession. It is sinking  
“ into a routine of devotional exercises, the effects of  
“ which terminate with themselves. It puts ortho-  
“ doxy in the place of reverence for truth, and  
“ substitutes pecuniary subscriptions for active per-  
“ sonal exertion. It is an agency worked pretty  
“ exclusively by ministers. It builds up ‘interests’  
“ instead of grappling with evils. It aspires to be  
“ genteel rather than irresistible. Its love of justice  
“ is not allowed to make a disturbance at home—if  
“ it wants play it must go to a distance. Its charity  
“ prefers foreign objects. Taking it for all in all it  
“ strikes one as an almost impenetrable mass of  
“ conventionalism—not positively dead, but com-  
“ pletely overlaid—sickly, fanciful, feminine, as an  
“ existence, dwindling into nominalism, as a life,  
“ fast decaying, as a power, all but void of efficiency.  
“ Of course there are exceptions, but in the main  
“ we fear such is the religionism of the middle  
“ classes of our time.”

In November of the same year (1849), his thoughts on the whole subject of the “British Churches in relation to the British people” were systematically arranged as a course of lectures which were first delivered in the theatre of the City of London Institute, and afterwards reprinted as a volume. Many readers of this memoir are no doubt familiar with the general scope and argument of this work. It has little relevancy to the present condition of things; but it was an important part of Mr. Miall’s

life work, and deserves something more than the scant notice that can be given to it in these pages. It was in the main an arraignment of the whole *modus vivendi* of religious bodies in this country, established and non-established. The object of the Church's existence to absorb, assimilate and display Godhood, he contended was not in any fair measure attained. The mission of Christ was to woo and win by love, and the work of the Churches should be also "to attract towards them the first glances of sorrow in search of commiseration, and to excite the first hopes of the oppressed;" they should be "well-heads of consolation, not only to select sufferers but to suffering of every sort." That they were not so would be generally acknowledged; the reasons of their failure to exhibit this characteristic were various. In the first place it was too generally conceived that man's happiness and safety, rather than God's rights, were the essential consideration. The salvation which the religion of the present day searches after, receives, exhibits, and enforces, is summed up in three words, the "greatest possible happiness." As a result of this substitution of effect for cause it had become a prevailing habit to constitute religion a distinct and separate engagement from the ordinary pursuits of man. "Had the Churches generally by preaching and by practice, presented the message of God by his Son more to the moral sympathies of men, and less to their sense of personal interest—had the tastes quickened and fostered in them been those conversant with and

“terminating in rightness rather than advantage ;  
“had the paramount idea they brought to bear upon  
“the world been that of the transcendently glorious  
“character of God as imaged in Jesus Christ instead  
“of the benefit accruing to man from the mediatorial  
“work, they would have diffused around them an  
“atmosphere of thought and sentiment which, in-  
“stead of hardening the unsubdued into indifference  
“and recklessness, would have progressively mellowed  
“them into susceptibility of impression.” After a  
detailed examination into the disorders of the Church  
engendered by the “aristocratic sentiment,” the  
“professional sentiment,” and the “trade spirit,”  
Mr. Miall devotes the two concluding chapters to a  
consideration of “social and political hindrances to  
the success of the Churches,” and “remedial sugges-  
tions.” In all these divisions of his subject, bold,  
searching criticism is applied to customs and teach-  
ings generally prevalent. Notably the failure of  
“organised Christianity” to minister to the needs of  
the poor is dwelt upon. Many of his remedial sug-  
gestions have been since adopted and with the  
happiest results. The utilising of public halls and  
spacious rooms for the proclamation of the gospel ;  
the abolition of pews and pulpits, and the employ-  
ment of “sacred edifices” for useful and beneficial  
purposes in which thousands of those who never  
enter them for worship have an interest ; the adop-  
tion of methods of approach to the industrial classes  
of a much freer character than is implied in a set

religious service ; the employment of lay agency ; these and similar manifestations of Christian enterprise, formerly tabooed and strenuously opposed by orthodoxy, have been freely resorted to for many years past.

The hostility which was provoked by the animadversions and recommendations contained in this volume has long since died away, but it was at the time most bitter and malignant. The discovery was made and announced with due solemnity by the champion of religious conventionalism,<sup>1</sup> that a "school of anarchy" was being formed, and that Dr. Price and Mr. Miall were using the organisation of the Anti-State Church Association for the promotion of their own objects. The numerous friends and supporters of that Association, it was said, were not acquainted with the cherished principles of its chief leaders—principles which, if they prevailed, would "for a season" expose "true religion to the peril of extinction," to avert which Dr. Campbell withdrew his patronage from the Anti-State Church Association.

"Alas ! alas ! all is lost," writes Mr. Miall in the *Nonconformist*. "The British Anti-State Church Association must be considered virtually defunct ! The fruit of six years toil is unexpectedly and suddenly blasted ! The second Triennial Conference, summoned for the end of the present month, may as well be given up. The *British Banner* 'no longer stands identified with the Association.' Fatal and irrecoverable

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*.

blow! The Executive Committee will, of course, deliberate whether there remains a reasonable hope that the organisation can survive so crushing a calamity.

"As we read the alarming declaration of the *Banner*, a little incident related to us, some years ago, of Robert Hall, of Leicester, danced unbidden before our mind's eye. A good deacon of the church over which that celebrated minister presided—a man of simple piety, humble circumstances, narrow mind, and large self-esteem—was on his death-bed, at the side of which stood his loving-hearted pastor. The deacon bade him adieu, adding, 'I shall be gone soon, Mr. Hall, but I hope the Church will continue faithful.' Mr. Hall hoped so too. 'You will preach and administer the ordinances as before?' Mr. Hall assented. 'Then there is only one other matter I wish to mention,' said the expiring man, 'I should like my body to be buried in the chapel, by way of giving my sanction to the cause.' What would have become of Mr. Hall's church but for this legacy of good will, it would, perhaps, be imprudent to conjecture.

"In an article in last week's *British Banner*, occupying four columns and a half, may be seen, in all the glory of capital letters, the following sentence, meant, no doubt, to be the moral of the whole, 'We no longer stand identified with the Anti-State Church Association.' After picturing to ourselves the dismay—nay, the black despair—which this solemn public announcement would create among the members of the Executive Committee, we tried, as is our wont, to fix attention upon the alleviating circumstances of the case. We thought that the defection from the movement of a newspaper which, little more than two years ago, had commenced, according to the averments of its advertising agents, with a weekly circulation of seventeen thousand, and had managed to write itself down to four thousand, or less than one-fourth of its number at starting, and which, to save itself from pecuniary ruin, had been compelled to raise by a fifth its original price, might, possibly, fail of carrying with it the entire body of Anti-State Church men.

"We remember what the editor of the *Banner* admits, that his attachment to the organisation, as a member of the Executive Committee, has been, not 'for the last year or two' only, but from the beginning, little more than 'nominal,' and that his public labours on its behalf have scarcely merited even that equivocal description. The edge of our grief and terror was somewhat taken off by our conviction that at the forthcoming Triennial Conference an effort would have been made, at the instance of the Executive Committee itself, to omit from the list of future members all names, however respectable, which stood for nothing in the shape of counsel or of work, and that the name of the editor of the *British Banner* would certainly have been among them; and this conviction of ours ushered in the consoling assurance that the Executive Committee will hardly be frightened out of their self-possession by a result which they have looked at as one possibly to be desired. And finally, our alarm was soothed into comparative moderation by reflections such as these—that there are men in this odd world of ours who have very ridiculous notions that they 'bear up the pillars thereof;' that the British Churches can furnish at least one specimen of Dame Partington and her mop; that this age is rather too far advanced in self-respect to be cowed into servility by bully Bottoms, whose style of writing says plainly, with their prototype, 'Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split;' and that, after all, things that are not in themselves strong enough, and vital enough, after several years' growth, to survive a voluminous puff of black smoke, have no very good title to further existence. Meditating these things, and such as these, we have calmed down into sufficient presence of mind to ask—'What is all this about?'"

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The second Triennial Conference of the Anti-State Church Association, which was held a few weeks



later, showed that the entire body of that organisation, which was becoming increasingly influential year by year, had the most unbounded confidence in its leaders, and understood their principles perfectly. A most encouraging report was presented by the committee—a record of crowded and successful meetings held in all the populous districts of England, Scotland, and Wales, and an enumeration of all those signs of the times, which justified those who believed in the truth and justice of Nonconformist principles, in reckoning that both in and outside of the Establishment, events were precipitating the issue which they were continuously working for. The Association had the misfortune to lose the services of Dr. Price as treasurer through resignation on account of ill health, but they gained in Mr. William Edwards an officer who for twenty years thereafter served them with a fidelity and quiet earnestness that could not be surpassed.

It was characteristic of the constitution of the Anti-State Church Association that it attracted and attached to itself men of large and liberal views—of steadfast faith and earnest hearts. The defection, so ostentatiously announced, must have served only to give a brighter lustre to such a galaxy of reformers as were in attendance at this Conference. Andrew Reed, George Conder, Charles Gilpin, W. Brock, John Burnet, J. G. Rogers, Joseph Fletcher, J. H. Tillett, Dr. Cox, H. H. Dobney, John Gordon, Howard Hinton, George Thompson, M.P.—these

among the speakers, and others of equal and even greater repute in their time, content to see and hear and vote without lifting their voices, were centres of influence in the constituencies, and before very long were destined by their direct action or that of their successors to do more than any other party in the State towards the formation of that Liberal majority in the House of Commons which at the present time upholds the strongest reforming Government this country has seen since the Commonwealth. But Mr. Miall was admonitory rather than jubilant:—

“This is but just the beginning,” he said, “the struggle is at hand. Let those who are not prepared for disgrace leave us here. Let those who are not prepared to buckle up for work leave us now. Depend upon it ours has been hitherto mere child’s play. It is when our blows are felt, when our enemy is provoked, we shall begin to feel the hardness of the struggle. When customers will be lost—when the frown of respectable ladies must be met—when Sabbath evening hearers must, if necessary, be given up—when every form of petty persecution will be employed to break down the spirit of those who are engaged in the advocacy or support of this work—it is then we shall find of what stuff our hearts are made. If we have not got a deep, earnest persuasion of the principles of this Association—if we cannot lay hold, with the firm grasp of faith, on whatever has been promised by the Head of the Church to those who, on behalf of the truth, are willing to give diligence and self-denial and exertion—if we cannot simply confide ourselves to the bare Word of God—we had better leave off now. . . . The sheer force of one sincere

“ mind on behalf of God’s truth is sufficient to carry  
“ it through every obstacle which may be opposed  
“ to it in its progress. Let cowards say ‘Give up.’  
“ We say we cannot give up that which is born of  
“ God. We will identify ourselves wholly with it.  
“ If it die, let us die ; if it triumph, we would fain  
“ be there.”

The following letters belong to this period :—

*To his WIFE.*

PORTOBELLO, *April 14th, 1849.*

Here I am, through the mercy of God, safe and comfortable after a long day’s journey from York. I started at a quarter-past nine o’clock this morning and reached here a little after seven, without getting five minutes the whole day for refreshment. But a good meal since my arrival here has set me all right.

The opposition which we had anticipated last night did not show itself after all. The walls of York had been placarded calling upon the friends of the Church to be present at the meeting and defeat the democrats and levellers. The clergy who swarm at York had a meeting to determine what they should do, and it was generally given out that one of them, the ablest of them, an arrogant Puseyite, was to speak on behalf of the Establishment, but whether the snow-storm frightened him, or whether they thought silence would be their best policy, certain it is that we had a very quiet meeting, and carried all our resolutions *nem. con.*

HALIFAX, *April 22nd, 1849.*

You will not be sorry to find, as I am not sorry in being able to tell you, that I am again in England and within easy reach of home. I arrived here last night about nine o’clock after a day’s hard travelling. I never turned my back on Scotland with greater delight. The dirty habits, the cold

manner, and religious intolerance of the people annoyed and distressed me more than on any previous visit. As far as regards our mission, I have little to complain of. We certainly had magnificent meetings, and I think our visit will turn to good account, both in kindling a new spirit and in putting funds into the treasurer's hands. Personally, too, we were treated with all distinction and honour, and I believe our labours told with full effect upon the Scottish mind. . . . Vincent has proved an excellent companion, bating some egotism, he is a noble fellow. And in truth good companionship was needed, for we have had a desperate week. For weather I can report little else than winds cold enough to shrivel you up, and snows every day enough to bury your blighted body; and for work, from Saturday morning in one week to Saturday night in the next, we travelled eight hundred miles, and addressed seven audiences—five public meetings and two public breakfasts.

However, here I am, scarcely the worse for the effort, in good health and good spirits. My cold and cough are somewhere in Northumberland, for I have felt nothing of them since I passed through it on my way to Scotland. . . . I mean to be home, if all be well, on Wednesday night. I shall leave this by an early train, dine at Leicester, and come on in the afternoon. Till then, good-bye, love and kisses to the children, and for yourself the heart of

Your most affectionate,

EDWARD.

*To MR. JOHN M. WEBB, JUN., in Hamburg.*

*"HOLLOWAY, September 29th, 1849.*

" . . . I need not tell you that the cigars are splendid, as you know that—or that they are welcome—that, perhaps, you might guess, or that I receive the present with a double gratification as coming upon me at unawares, and from yourself. But I will say that I am peculiarly sensible of

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your generous attention, and cordially grateful for the handsome manner in which you have been pleased to express it. I am not a regular cigar smoker, but I enjoy them much occasionally as a sort of tit-bit or delicacy, as some people enjoy game. Of course, therefore, your bounty will last me a long time, and I shall, amidst rather heavy demands upon my thoughts, have you often in pleasant reminiscence. Not that I associate you in my thoughts exclusively with smoke—much less with puffing, whether solemn or hilarious. But your face will be visible to my fancy in the ringlets of fragrant vapour, or loom indistinctly through the clouds which you have given me the means of blowing. I shall think—just so he would look in Hamburg; for I suppose in that land of universal smoking the clear sharp outline of a face is never visible, and all things are seen through a hazy medium. Perhaps, indeed, German mysticism is to be traced to this cause—certainly, I attribute to it the reflective over the perceptive faculties in that country.

“I am much obliged by your invitation to come over and see you. At present I am shut up, preparing a course of lectures on ‘The British Churches in relation to the British People,’ which I intend delivering in November, and publishing in a volume immediately afterwards. The course is designed to give my views of what true Christianity is, and what is morbid and spurious in our existing modes of embodying and displaying it. I imagine the general tenor of my opinions will be such as you will concur in—especially on the *Ministry*—but I look for a terrible hullabaloo as soon as they are launched. I have not indeed dealt hardly with the *men*, but if I mistake not I have aimed a blow at the *order* which the men will resent. My ground, however, I believe, is firm under me, and the more discussion is elicited the worse it will be, I believe, for the monopoly of Christian teaching.

“But I am running away from the point, namely, your invitation to Hamburg. Well, next summer, if we live and

are well, a Peace Congress will be held at Frankfort, which I mean to attend. If so I shall certainly (should it be convenient), give you a look, either immediately before or after the said Congress, and smoke a cigar with you on your own 'flat.'

"I am glad to hear well of your health, and hope you will remain hearty, and most sincerely desire for you, in the highest of senses, that in the *corpore sano* there may be the *mens sana*.

"To be right with God is to be right with the universe, and unchangeably right for eternity. That this blessing may be yours, my dear friend, is the sincere desire and prayer of

"Yours very faithfully,

"EDWARD MIALL."

In the autumn of 1850 a great scare was produced amongst English Protestants generally by the "Apostolic Letter" of Pope Pius IX., establishing the Roman Catholic Episcopal Hierarchy, and dividing England into episcopal districts. The incident is well remembered; but the points of the controversy which raged around it are not so distinctly borne in mind. It is not necessary to dwell upon them here at any length. But in tracing my father's public course reference to it should not be omitted. He almost alone amongst leaders of opinion stood unmoved, and refused to join in the general clamour against the Papal rescript. His persistent attitude of tolerance gave occasion to some to represent him as a Jesuit in disguise. But his position was, that if danger existed it existed long ago, and was not

created by the mere change in the style and title of the Roman Catholic bishops: the danger rather was in the hierarchical influence, which, in his contention, was a much more real evil as to these realms in the Anglican Church than in the Romish. "Had " we been able to carry out our first intentions," he writes when the panic was at its highest, " we would " have made this act of the Pope's a fulcrum upon " which to rest the lever of argument against every " kind of alliance between the priestly and the " magisterial power, and have attempted to turn " the indignation of the people against the primary " cause of the mischief protested against."


It was with this view that he had a few weeks previously attended a meeting in the neighbourhood of his own residence, called for the purpose of moving an address to Her Majesty the Queen, in consequence of the late attempt of the Pope to establish a Roman hierarchy in England. The resolution, submitted by the conveners of the meeting, denounced the act of the Pope as an invasion of the supremacy of the Crown, and the rights and privileges of the English Church, and as an outrage on the Protestant feelings of the nation. Mr. Miall sent up a note to the chairman, the Vicar of Islington, saying that he should wish to move an amendment, the terms of which he submitted to the reverend gentleman. It ran as follows :—

" That this meeting having had under consideration the " apostolical letter of the Pope of Rome, claiming exclusive

“ spiritual jurisdiction in these realms, and dividing the country into ecclesiastical districts, expresses its surprise and indignation at the arrogant pretensions involved in such a procedure; but at the same time it is no less strongly opposed to the assumption and exercise of similar claims and authority by any other hierarchy, from whatever quarter it may profess to derive authority.”

The chairman, after holding the amendment in his hand for nearly an hour, asked the meeting whether they wished to hear a gentleman named Miall, who had an amendment to move. This appeal was followed by discordant cries, amid which the latter mounted the platform, and was waiting for the tumult to subside, when two clergymen seized him with great violence, lifted him off his feet, and hurled him on to the floor. A lady sitting on the upper step to the platform, and another lady a little further off, against both of whom he fell, made the descent more easy for him; and happily without themselves receiving any injury. This proceeding was referred to afterwards by the *Record*, as “ *a strong expression of the sense of the meeting.*” It is scarcely necessary to add that the two doughty champions of Protestant ascendancy had to make a public apology for their o’er-hasty zeal.

My father was “ maligned by foes and rebuked by friends,” because he would not join in the universal shriek of horror that proceeded from all good Protestant subjects, and yet was he not in the right when, after the country had been ~~completely~~ agitated for





four months, he wrote, *à propos* of the Government Ecclesiastical Titles Bill :—

“ What a tiny product of a national agitation ! The mouse  
 “ born of a labouring mountain was a magnificent result in  
 “ comparison. Think of November and December, 1850 !  
 “ Every county assembled—every municipality—almost every  
 “ parish. What enthusiastic meetings ! What fervid ora-  
 “ tory ! What laudation of the Durham letter ! And the  
 “ newspaper press, with some exceptions among weekly and  
 “ provincial journals, was mad—actually raved, most elo-  
 “ quently, no doubt, and promised new guarantees for Pro-  
 “ testantism when Parliament should meet. Clergy sent up  
 “ addresses to bishops, and bishops sent back grave replies.  
 “ There were memorials to Her Majesty. There were peti-  
 “ tions to Parliament. Pamphlets and sermons fell on the  
 “ public mind as thick as snow-flakes. The very walls cried  
 “ to every passer-by, ‘No Popery !’ For two months no-  
 “ thing else was thought of. ‘Papal aggression’ seemed to  
 “ shake the nerves and to obfuscate the sense of nearly the  
 “ entire middle-class section of the community. What it  
 “ would have come to but for trust in Lord John we will not  
 “ attempt to conjecture. For a brief period the noble lord  
 “ was the pet champion of British Protestantism. Behold  
 “ the issue ! An Act of Parliament—no, we are premature—  
 “ not an Act, but a Bill, which imposes a penalty of 100%.  
 “ upon the wearer of any legally unauthorised territorial  
 “ ecclesiastical title, which penalty is not intended to be  
 “ enforced ! ‘In the name of the prophet—figs.’ When  
 “ we read Sir George Grey’s *copia verborum* speech on Friday  
 “ night, and arrived at last at a correct knowledge of what of  
 “ the Bill was to remain, the first rhyme we ever learned kept  
 “ jingling in our ears, and soon settled itself into the following  
 “ stanza :—

“ What a little thing am I  
 Now they’ve laid me on the table ;  
 Born of England’s lustiest cry,  
 Yet to work I am not able.”

“ Lord John Russell took three months to collect tribute  
“ from the public mind—specimens of the public will, demon-  
“ strations, indications, suggestions, exhortations, addresses,  
“ resolutions, leading articles, pamphlets, and having cast  
“ them all into the cabinet crucible that they might be re-  
“ duced to a practicable shape, this one-claused, dead-letter  
“ Bill is the best result his comprehensive statesmanship  
“ can produce. Oh, rare Lord John! And he puts this  
“ forward, forsooth, as a vindication of his sovereign’s in-  
“ sulted dignity, and an assertion of his country’s inde-  
“ pendence! Her Majesty, we venture to believe, will appre-  
“ ciate the compliment, just as the country will esteem the  
“ service. Well, we are not sorry that the Whigs returned to  
“ the posts they had forsaken. None can henceforth mistake  
“ them. They have written themselves down in large-hand  
“ characters, ‘humbugs.’ We do not like the word, but there  
“ is no other in our language which so exactly describes them  
“ as statesmen.”

## CHAPTER X.

### ENTERS PARLIAMENT AS MEMBER FOR ROCHDALE.

1851.

The Whig Ministry and the Papal Assumptions.—Mr. Miall's Recommendations—Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Invitation to Represent Rochdale—Mr. Bright's Recommendation—Dissolution of 1852 and Rochdale Election—Mr. Miall Returned—Views on Church Property Question—"Bases of Belief"—Attitude in the House of Commons—Progress of the *Nonconformist Parliamentary Sketches*—"Disraeli"—"Disraeli and Gladstone," a Contrast—"Gladstone"—"Macaulay"—"Bright"—"Lord John Russell"—Coalition Ministry Formed—Mr. Miall counsels "Limited and Reserved" Support—Proportion of Protestant Free Churchmen to the Electorate in the New Parliament—Principles of Nonconformity Defined in the House of Commons—Early Triumph of English Radical Party in the Oxford University (Tests) Bill—Further Signs of Progress in Religious Quality Principles—1853, Church Rates in the House of Commons—Mr. Miall's Speeches in Parliament in 1853, 1854, and 1855—Indisposition—Tour in Switzerland—Extracts from Letters to Mrs. Miall—Home Life—Speeches at Rochdale on the Russian War.

THROUGHOUT the greater part of 1851 the cry of "No Popery" continued to resound from the platform, the pulpit, and even from the streets and lanes of English towns. The country was panic-stricken, or at least those sections of it which were affected by such impalpable dangers as the ambitious designs of the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman. "The protestantism

of the Protestant religion" though not the "dissidence of Dissent" found partial expression in seven thousand public meetings, and clamoured for immediate legislation. Lord Russell's celebrated "Durham" letter showed that he too was looking in the direction of parliamentary restrictions for deliverance from priestly domination. Lord Palmerston admitted that something must be done, but rather because the popular feeling could not otherwise be satisfied than because he or any member of his cabinet saw what could justly be effected. As time wore on the practical harmlessness of the papal assumptions was more clearly seen, no less than the folly and impolicy of meeting them by legislative enactments. My father mercilessly assailed the Russell Government for the feeble and unstatesmanlike character of their measures, not however without indicating the means by which, according to his view, the designs of the Pope and his abettors might be defeated.

"There is a deep feeling among the laity of the Church of England,"<sup>1</sup> he writes, "that Protestantism, not to mention pure religion, is not safe in the exclusive guardianship of their hierarchy and clergy, that the danger with which they imagine themselves to be threatened by the late proceedings of the Pope was strongly invited, and is greatly increased, by the growing spirit of sacerdotalism in the Establishment." . . . "Now if Lord John Russell chose to make his

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, January 5th, 1851.


policy an embodiment of this feeling, he might make himself, as our French neighbours phrase it, 'master of the situation.' " This should be done, he suggests, by endeavouring to turn through the Church of England "a cleansing and renovating stream of wholesome opinion." He should at once abolish the Bible printing monopoly, raise the Oxford and Cambridge Universities to the rank of really national institutions, throwing them open to all sects without distinction, and in general commence "a reversal of that policy which events have demonstrated to be unsound and perilous, by which of late years public money has been largely applied to the payment of religious teachers of various sects, in our colonies" . . . . "place all 'religious houses' under periodical inspection and submit a measure calculated to prevent the fraudulent obtaining of charitable bequests."

The final shape of the "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill" was determined rather by the bishops and the ultra-Protestant majority in the House of Commons than by any special views of Lord John or his cabinet. "It stands in relation to other parliamentary proceedings as the miserable parish boy does to 'society at large,'" wrote Mr. Miall; "The Tories were not the authors of it, the Whigs would not have made it what it is, the Free Traders and Radicals disown it, the Irish brigade would fain have smothered it. And at last it gets out of the House of Commons by an unforeseen accident, without a certificate of

paternity, and almost without a proof of settlement."

In this year (1851) my father received an invitation to make a statement of his political views to the electors of Rochdale, it being intimated by Mr. Sharman Crawford, the sitting member, that he should not seek re-election. A dissolution had appeared to be imminent in the early part of the session, for the Government were supported by so small a majority that Lord John Russell resigned, but after an interregnum of ten days again resumed the responsibilities of office, the Tories being unwilling just then to face the difficulties of the situation. It was evident that a general election must very soon take place. Mr. John Bright, then member for Manchester, and an elector of Rochdale, attended the meeting summoned to receive my father, and while refraining from using any undue influence upon the minds of the committee of selection, gave his reasons for desiring that Mr. Miall should be the representative of the borough. The latter therefore gave a full exposition of his principles, and as the result of the meeting he was heartily accepted as the Liberal candidate by the whole party.

In the early part of the next session of Parliament (1852) Lord Derby took office, and a dissolution followed almost immediately. My father went down again to Rochdale, and being loyally supported by the entire Liberal party won the seat by a majority of 154 out of 904 voting electors.



In the course of his public declaration of principles at Rochdale he stated explicitly what were at that time his views as to the disposition of Church property.

“ I believe that a very large proportion of what is called “ Church property in this kingdom is national property. I “ believe that the tithe property cannot have originated as “ it is sometimes assumed to have originated, in the bequests “ of our pious ancestors. The property is of such a kind that “ it could only have arisen out of law, and that which law “ has made, law is competent to unmake. But I would not “ even resume the property which belongs to the people in “ such a manner as to inflict injustice upon those who now “ enjoy it. All life interests ought to be respected. Nay, I “ would even give pecuniary compensation to those who, “ under a fresh arrangement of Church property, would lose “ that which has now a marketable value ; and having done “ this, having seen to it that no individual suffered special “ injustice in consequence of doing justice to the public, “ then, I think, we might, without any fear whatever of sacri- “ lege, receive into our hands the property of the Church, “ and dispose of it for secular purposes as we might see “ fit.”

If, on my father's entrance into parliamentary life, his appearance on the platform was less frequent than it had hitherto been, there was no evidence in his public acts or writings, of distraction of mind, or diminished concentration of thought and purpose. Even in the region of abstract religious thought his mind was busy. It was at the close of this year that he published his *Bases of Belief*, a volume intended to meet and counteract the negative views

lately set forth with every fascination of style in the *Phases of Faith* and *Nemesis of Faith*; and whatever difference of opinion might be entertained as to the intrinsic and permanent value of the work as a contribution to the body of Christian evidence, no impartial reader could fail to see or admit that the argument was most clearly and logically constructed, and that the plan of the work was arranged with the utmost skill and care.<sup>1</sup>

In the House of Commons, the same consistency that had characterised his public course hitherto continued to mark his parliamentary career. Rarely taking part in the debates, he nevertheless availed himself of every opportunity of putting the principles of religious equality fairly before the House. "Happily," wrote Mr. Miall,<sup>2</sup> a few months before his election, in relation to the electoral policy of Dissenters, "men are not obliged to give a holiday to their discretion, merely because they are impelled by inexorable determination to pursue a given object. Waiting and watching are not incompatible with steadfastness of purpose." . . . "The principle is one which may be fairly avowed at any time—the measures required to give it effect may have to be fought for singly. We have a

<sup>1</sup> My principal reason for abstaining from any extended allusion to this work is, that I shrink from the attempt to give any representation of its contents lest I should fail to do justice to my father's design. Moreover, I must assume that many who read these pages have themselves seen it.

<sup>2</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xii. p. 348.



“long way to go, and we are solemnly resolved  
“upon going there; but where we cannot fly we  
“may run, where we cannot run we may walk,  
“where we cannot walk we may creep. Our end  
“is before us; how it may best be attained we must  
“leave to courage, sagacity, experience, time, events,  
“and, we add without irreverence, to God.” This  
was precisely his attitude in the House of Commons.

The *Nonconformist* continued to win the confidence of the more advanced portion of the Liberal party. Its weekly circulation was, however, never so large as to make it a thorough commercial success, and while the editor had the satisfaction of knowing that its influence as an organ of political opinion was second to none of its compeers in the weekly metropolitan press, he had often reason to wish that its increasing number of readers would furnish him with some more tangible proof of the estimation in which his paper was held. The labour of providing the requisite weekly assortment of news and political leaders had been now for some time shared by his brother, Charles S. Miall, and by the late Washington Wilks, and, in the literary department, by the late Rev. G. B. Bubier. The paper was in all respects an excellent budget of news, foreign, domestic, political and ecclesiastical, parliamentary and literary, and was held in the highest repute by all the provincial Liberal papers, and not a few of the metropolitan. An interesting feature added to it when my father entered Parliament, was a series of

parliamentary notes, consisting of a running comment upon the incidents of the debates. Occasional descriptive sketches of the leading speakers of the time imparted additional interest to the record of the speeches. The following extracts may be given in illustration :—

DISRAELI (1852).—It wants just five-and-twenty minutes to five when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rises to lay before Parliament and the country his long and eagerly expected financial statement. Perhaps you think, and very naturally too, that looking to all that is suspended upon the evening's performance—fame, place, power—he will evince some little tremor of the nervous system, some slight and passing show of emotion. But you are mistaken—he has schooled himself into seeming impassibility. That face of his, of brazen hue, is neither flushed nor pallid. His eye does not blink. His voice does not falter. His hand does not shake. He commences in a tone of easy unconcern, as if he were about to bring in a mere railway or turnpike Bill. But he asks to be heard *through* without interruption, so that the House may judge of his proposals altogether, and not express its feeling on any of the points taken singly and without reference to the rest. His request is substantially complied with. He is listened to for upwards of three hours out of five with deep interest. He is never fluent. Perhaps he might be if he would, but he studiously affects deliberation. As he takes out each set of papers necessary for the explanation of his point, he carefully unties the red tape, drops a word or two at long intervals whilst searching for the particular sheet he requires, and having made it serve his purpose puts it back in its place, ties the bundle up again with tape, and restores it to the red box, all the while retaining small segments of a sentence, which he never loses sight of until it is complete. He carries *nonchalance* to absurd extremities.

Occasionally he will adjust his neck-tie—once he positively cleaned his nails. One could hardly help suspecting that he *meant* to occupy just five hours—and that he put in practice a variety of petty arts to fill up the time. The result was, he grew wearisome. Between eight and nine o'clock the House was much thinned, and the refreshment rooms were well attended. His audience rallied somewhat before he closed, and when at length he sat down he was cheered on all sides, but we think without enthusiasm.

THE SAME (1852).—At last Mr. Disraeli rises. Like a wild boar at bay, he is reckless whom he wounds. How different his tone and manner now from what it was when he unfolded his Budget. He is not negligent as then, but concentrated and earnest, if the reader can understand what earnestness resembles when there is no heart. Sir James Graham, Sir Charles Wood, Sir F. Baring, and Mr. Goulburn are treated with a contemptuous scorn, so bitter, so remorseless, as to excite sympathy in their favour rather than against them. The hits are venomous. Sir James Graham he characterises as a man whom he does not respect, but greatly regards. He tells Sir C. Wood to remember that petulance is not criticism, and that insolence is not invective. He puts the three ex-chancellors together, and describes their gesticulation and their mental calibre by saying that one after another they have risen up “to shake their beldame hands at me.” To the advice tendered him by Sir C. Wood, to follow the example of Mr. Pitt and *others*, and withdraw his Budget, he replies—“To the high fame of Mr. Pitt I do not aspire, but I will not submit to the degradation of *others*.” In argument he is strong on episodes—the main point he evades . . . and when, after a three hours’ speech, he sits down, he leaves upon your mind a sense of profound regret that so powerful an intellect should be without the guidance of a conscience.

DISRAELI AND GLADSTONE—A CONTRAST (1854).—You hear him (Disraeli) speak with much the same emotions as you would gaze upon a mask, perfect in its kind. You are

pleased or startled, tickled or irritated—but with a consciousness of which you cannot get rid, that you have before you a semblance only, not a reality. You listen to him as you might do to Kean or Kemble, for entertaining, not for serious purposes. He is beginning to fail, even as an actor. His tricks are worn out by repetition. There were in his long speech weary wastes of words where not a flower nor even a living weed relieved the insufferable monotony of dust, dust, dust—there were repetitions so often repeated that no one could acquit him of the intention of speaking against time—there were sudden thrusts at personal rivals or party foes which indicated a greater love of mischief than any deep-seated malice, and which were spiteful rather than vindictive. . . . We never saw the House so weary of him. Oh, what a relief it was when Mr. Gladstone rose! when once again you could feel satisfied that you were listening to a man with a purpose and a heart. He was necessarily more rapid than usual, for it was half-past one in the morning when he commenced. He was less excited than he might have been; but he certainly contrived in less than an hour's speech to leave his adversary stripped of mask and finery—looking, on review, much as an actor might do after leaving the stage and his heroics, and dropping suddenly down, with face yet unwashed and bonnet yet undoffed, to the vulgar business of our every-day social life.

GLADSTONE (1853):—We think it would be impossible to have sat through these apparently interminable discussions without acquiring a high notion of the singular aptitude of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his office. The question necessarily involves a vast multiplicity of details of great delicacy, and must have required for their adjustment a very wide range of information, and a spirit of conscientious fairness not often found in the same individual. Mr. Gladstone has made himself master of the whole subject. He is never at loss. He seems to have carefully gone over the entire breadth of the question, to have taken all its bearings, to

have weighed whatever was to be urged on either hand, and to have deliberately come to a decision, influenced only by the preponderance of reasons before him. Nothing comes upon him at unawares. He never appears to have got beyond his depth. Whether he has to meet a formal amendment, or to answer an impromptu inquiry, he is ready, clear, and decided. Such is his mastery over his materials, so lucid and logical in his mind, and so marvellously apt is he to give precise and pleasing expression to his thoughts, that his observations are always fresh, and, even in committee, he often rises insensibly into eloquence. To these qualifications he adds a charming suavity of temper, which, however, although it tempers the asperity of debate, never degenerates into imbecility of purpose. He knows precisely what he contends for, and he firmly pursues it, undismayed by faction, unseduced by flattery. Whether his physical strength and patience will hold out to the end still remains to be seen. At present he has given to the world a very high illustration of a statesman who, to the boldness of conception adds the practical sagacity, the indomitable industry, and the moderation of temper necessary to give it effect.

MACAULAY (1853):—The right hon. member for Edinburgh is a pet of the House of Commons, and we really cannot wonder at it. His style of oratory is quite exhilarating. He is no logician, but then he makes you forget logic. His matter is full of information picturesquely arranged; his point of view is always commanding; his imagery half poetic and in exquisite taste; his diction elaborately polished; his delivery calm and easy, but at the same time rapid and energetic. He insinuates himself into your soul like a vernal breeze, his thoughts drop upon you like fragrant balm. You know—you cannot but know—that he has prepared every sentence, and yet so perfect is his art, that it is only on reflection that any trace of it can be detected. Standing up just behind the ministerial bench, his broad chest and massive head being quite conspicuous, and some symptoms of ill-

health lingering on his countenance, he poured out an oration which the House drank in with evident rapture, and many a member whose view of the question had not previously been decided went out into the lobby influenced mainly by that remarkable speech. We can well understand how dangerous a power he must have once exercised in giving a gloss to Whig compromises and finding an apology for Whig deficiencies.

JOHN BRIGHT (1853):—John Bright is usually, in his oratory as in his physical build, broad, sturdy, powerful. He seldom opens his mouth on matters that he has not well studied, and he drives at once at the main points. He wanders into details only just so far as may be useful for illustration—he never bewilders you with them. He has the moral courage to say whatever his strong common sense dictates, and whilst personally courteous he can say the hardest things in most unmistakable phrase. His voice is somewhat monotonous, but it is clear, sonorous, and level, and his first and his last words are equally audible to all. What effect his earlier senatorial effects may have produced we are not able to say, but at present he commands his audience and is felt as a power.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL (1854):—Expectation was not a whit less excited yesterday, although fewer members had made the necessary sacrifice to indulge it. Many had left town, and the benches, therefore, were not inconveniently filled. The air of Lord John was mournful. We had occasion to speak with him on a matter of business but a minute before he rose, and could not fail to observe that his mind was too oppressed to allow of his giving attention to minor matters. It is said, and we can easily believe it, that he had passed two sleepless nights. And yet when he rose to discharge his duty he commenced in a calm business-like manner. He first disposed of the question of adjournment, and certainly lost no portion of the good-will of the House by announcing that, for reasons at which he briefly glanced, he should move the reassembling of the House on the Thursday

in the place of the Monday following Easter week. He then went on to show that his personal honour was not more engaged to the Reform question than the honour of the cabinet. He touched upon the causes which had prevented the fulfilment of their honest intentions, and he pledged himself that as soon as affairs should permit of his reintroducing the measure, modified, perhaps, in some of its provisions, he should feel bound to do so. Such an abandonment of his long-cherished resolution, he said, might expose him to the taunts and sarcasms of the right hon. gentleman opposite, but this he did not mind, as he had grown used to it. He was more troubled at the thought of the disappointment which might be experienced by his own friends and supporters. "If it should be thought that the course he was taking would damage the cause of Reform,"—the noble lord paused, choked with the violence of his own emotions. Then arose a cheer from both sides of the House, loud and long continued, during which the noble lord struggled to regain his self-mastery. Every eye was glistening with sudden moisture, and every heart was softened into genuine sympathy. After a minute or two of cheering the noble lord resumed, but in a still faltering voice and with tearful accents. But his feelings had done what no logic could have accomplished. The effect was electric. Old prejudices, long pent-up grudges, accumulated discontents, uncharitable suspicions, all melted away beneath that sudden outburst of a troubled heart. The patriot had conquered the man, but it was the agony of the man that had conquered the House. Henceforth he will stand higher in the esteem of every one who witnessed the scene of last night than ever he did before.


The Derby-Disraeli Government remained in office less than six months after their appeal to the country. They were decisively defeated upon the Budget, and were followed by a Coalition Ministry, with Lord

Aberdeen as its chief, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone being also members of the cabinet. This administration my father wrote of as being "a necessity of the times, adapted to carry the country through that stage of transition between the traditional and the true which has yet to be passed over by the public mind." "Hence our duty," he goes on to say, "appears to be to give to Her Majesty's advisers a limited and reserved support—to aid them heartily in carrying out those ameliorations which will be their main business—to oppose them strenuously in any efforts they may make to legislate on unsound principles—and to take advantage of every fair opening which may occur for exhibiting and enforcing those grand truths for the complete triumph of which we must wait with patience.

The new Parliament contained thirty-eight Protestant Free-Churchmen of various denominations, and it is worthy of notice that these members, though few in number, represented constituencies comprising an electorate of 228,057 and a population of 4,290,905. The entire electorate of England, Wales, and Scotland was at that time somewhat over 1,000,000, and the population, in round numbers, 20,000,000. It was evident therefore that in large and populous constituencies great progress had been made by the advocates of Free-Church principles.<sup>1</sup>

It was never a wish of my father's that this battle of ecclesiastical freedom should be fought out on the

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xii. p. 598





lines of Dissent *versus* Episcopacy. He strenuously endeavoured to awaken the minds of Churchmen to the evils inherent in the Church of England system of government and patronage, and with the full belief that in generations yet to come there would be none "who would look back with so much thankfulness to him for what he had done, or exhibit such respect for his memory, as the descendants of those very persons who regarded him as their great antagonist and as their chief foe."<sup>1</sup> No one had hitherto contrived to represent this view of the matter so as to bring it into recognition by statesmen and politicians, but it could be said with truth a year after my father's admission to the House of Commons that "the sneer of contempt had been exchanged for the silence of respect," and that Voluntaryism was admitted "to have something worth consideration to urge in its own favour."

The first manifestation of the strength of the English Radical party in the House was in a division upon a clause proposed by Mr. Heywood to be embodied in the Oxford University Bill, a measure introduced by Lord John Russell for the better regulation and management of the affairs of the University. Upon the first reading of the Bill, Lord John had referred to the question of the admission of Dissenters, and declared himself in favour of it, but introduced no provision for their relief in this Bill. Mr. Miall and Mr. Heywood strongly

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Birmingham Town Hall, March, 1851.

contended for the right of Dissenters to university teaching. "When this House proceeded to impose taxation," said the former, "he and his fellow Dissenters were treated as being part of the nation, but whenever the House had, as now, advantages of an educational or other kind to confer, he and they were dealt with as no part of the nation." . . . "This was a Bill to extend and improve a great national institution for the exclusive benefit of one-third of Her Majesty's subjects." It was three months later, when the Bill had passed through committee and came up for consideration as amended, that Mr. Heywood moved the addition of a clause abolishing all oaths and declarations on matriculation. This was carried against the Government by a majority of ninety-one, and was accordingly added to the Bill, and carried through the Lords, thereby securing the admission of Dissenters to the benefits of university teaching at Oxford. An attempt to procure the abolition of tests on taking academical degrees by the same measure was lost by the narrow majority of nine. The announcement of the division first mentioned took the House by surprise ; the Roman Catholic members had freely given their aid ; and "we are bound to add," writes Mr. Miall,<sup>1</sup> "the active, indefatigable, persistent efforts of the Parliamentary Committee of the Liberation Society<sup>2</sup> turned all

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xiv. p. 525.

<sup>2</sup> The title of the "British Anti-State Church Association" was altered in 1853 to that of the "Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control."

these elements of success to good account, and proved how much may be gained in the political world by making parliamentary action a constant and specific business."

Another sign of progress was the secularisation of Church property in Canada involved in the passing of the Clergy Reserves (Canada) Bill. "In 1853 the Imperial Parliament conceded to the Canadian Legislature the power of terminating a dangerous and long-continued agitation by applying to secular uses lands the proceeds of which had hitherto maintained the clergy of various sects. That power they had now exercised, and on the express ground that 'it is desirable to remove all semblance of connection between Church and State,' the statute book of Canada decreed that throughout the colony, as in the neighbouring states of America, the maintenance of religion should devolve on the liberality and zeal of its own friends."<sup>1</sup> From this result Mr. Miall had good reason to derive encouragement. One of his foremost motives for establishing the *Nonconformist* was the fear that State-Churchism was about to extend its baleful influence over the whole of our foreign dependencies and possessions. "We know now," he wrote, "that State-Churchism is no longer to be feared as a *growing* evil. It decays in its extremities. Its area of influence is now circumscribed. We not only know the very worst of it, but we see it year after year diminishing in prestige, in volume, in

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Council of the Liberation Society for 1855.

intensity. An immense, an incalculable advantage this—a gain for which, a few years since, we would gladly have paid whatever we possessed.”

The second reading of a bill introduced by Sir William Clay, for the abolition of Church rates, affirmed as it was by a majority of twenty-eight in a House of over 400 members, was a further proof that Dissenters had an enormous amount of undeveloped power which they were only just beginning to employ.

Throughout the three sessions of 1853, 1854, and 1855, Mr. Miall had frequently taken part in the debates on questions of ecclesiastical policy, but never had he made a claim on the House in his capacity of Dissenter. “I stand here,” he said, in the course of a debate on the improvement of Church property, “as one of the nation, and in the eye of the law a member of the National Church. I may choose to forego the ministrations of that Church, but I do not therefore surrender my legal right in it. I claim the better distribution of its revenues, not for Dissenters, but for the nation at large—and I will not consent by any vote of mine to recognise this property as the property of the religious sect, happening at the present moment to be in association with the State. The property is national, and should be employed for national objects.”

The session of 1854 was especially prolific in discussions on ecclesiastical questions. In addition to those already referred to, there were the Ministers’

Money (Ireland) Bill, Parliamentary Oaths Bill, Colonial Clergy Disabilities Bill, Episcopal and Capitular Estates Bill, Church Building Acts Amendment Bill, and other measures involving reference to the underlying principle of State control in matters of religious faith and practice upon which the Dissenters were at issue with the majority in the House of Commons. In the period embraced between the opening of Parliament and the Easter recess it was pointed out by a correspondent of the *Leeds Mercury* that while there were fifty-four divisions on questions of public interest, no less than twenty-six had been taken on matters of a polemical character. Mr. Miall and Mr. Hadfield were principally concerned in the endeavour to set forth, in as clear and dispassionate a manner as possible, the nature of Nonconformist principles, and their bearing on the particular subject under debate; above all, their object was to acquire for their cause "a commanding moral position in Parliament, by associating it with disinterestedness, justice, generosity, and candour." In this, it will be generally admitted by those familiar with the parliamentary records of that time, they fairly succeeded.

In my father's case, the result of close attendance in the House, and unremitting labour in connection with the *Nonconformist* and the Liberation Society, was to disable him temporarily from the prosecution of his work. A trip to Switzerland, however, of a few weeks' duration, speedily restored him to health. Writing from Geneva to Mrs. Miall a week after his

departure, he says—"My health is improving every day; indeed, I begin to feel strong, and I have almost entirely overgot my nervous depression."

A fortnight later, after a nine days' tour in the mountains, he writes (Geneva, August 16th, 1854):—

"Thank God! I am stronger than I have known myself for three or four years past, and have the feeling of having become at least ten years younger. I have purchased this renovated health at the expense of extraordinary fatigue, and believe I have perspired more during the last few days than I should have done under a dozen vapour baths. . . . I have been among the wonders of God's hands; and mind, as well as body, has, I trust, partaken of the benefit."

Descriptions of Alpine travelling are not so rare that one can suppose any lengthened extract from this letter, intended only for the delectation of the "home circle," would possess much interest for readers of this biographical narrative. I conceive, however, that a portion of it will not come amiss. After speaking of Chamounix, where he sat on a little knoll smoking his cigar, "and gazed and gazed and gazed until he became fascinated," he goes on to describe a partial ascent of Mont Blanc undertaken the following day, and of its effect upon his bodily condition:—

"I am off with a guide soon after breakfast for the Mer de Glace. I decline a mule—I feel strong enough to walk. Upwards I toil for four miles and a half; my heart beats loudly, my chest oppressed, my skin feverish, my nervous system all of a tingle, and my respiration laborious from

exertion. I stop every few minutes and recover—get somewhat better as I get higher, but am glad to reach the chalèt at the top, for the rain is just beginning to pour down in torrents. I go into the eating-room, and find it filled with people—five or six parties having ascended before me. I sit down for half an hour, and now perspire from every pore, so as completely to saturate my clothes. I take a little cognac, and the rain having ceased, descend to the Mer de Glace. With the help of my guide I venture some distance on it, and look down into the chasms in the ice which yawn on every hand. It is a wonderful phenomenon—unique—the most characteristic I had yet seen. And after that perspiration I seem to have thrown off my illness. What it was I know not—but from a state of distress, such as I should be sorry to endure often, I passed into one of lightness, activity, and cheerfulness in a few minutes, and I tripped down the mountain, although it rained heavily, as fresh and blithe as ever I felt.”

If the narrative turns again somewhat abruptly to political events, it is because a close following of my father's course necessarily leads to such a record. And yet he had no inborn desire for controversy, and would fain have avoided all occasions of public reference to the subject of his labours and anxieties. He had committed himself to an arduous enterprise, and he continued to prosecute it in no niggard spirit. Unfortunately, his training and early induction into pressing and almost unintermittent mental labours left all forms of bodily recreation out of account excepting that of walking, to which he steadily adhered. The life of the family and a very restricted social circle afforded to him all he required

in the way of mental relaxation. Though generally immured in his study until supper-time, he was then full of life and pleasantry, as he sat surrounded by his own family.<sup>1</sup> A great lover of music, one of his favourite forms of diversion was to take a part in glees, part songs, and oratorios. In our social musical gatherings formed for the practice of this class of music he was generally the conductor, being at once a good reader and timeist, and having a thorough appreciation of musical expression.

Before passing to the Parliamentary session of 1856, and the resolution introduced by my father upon the Irish Church question, a word or two must be added with reference to the subject of the war with Russia, which commenced in 1854, and was continued until the spring of 1856. His position shall be stated by himself. Speaking at Rochdale just before the actual commencement of hostilities, he said :—

“ Whilst I am not a member of the Peace Society I have taken an active part with the Peace Congress—that is, I have felt it my duty to teach the folly and wickedness of war, to put down all incitement to war, to endeavour to come to an arrangement with other nations for the gradual dismissal of their armies, and to insert clauses in all future treaties that disputed questions shall be settled by arbitration. I believe such a course to be a practical and rational course. I look upon war as a great calamity, the full power and mischief of which none can possibly estimate. I know well that silent despotism and tyranny may produce in the

<sup>1</sup> The last of five children was born in 1839.




end perhaps more wickedness, demoralisation, and infinitely more misery than war itself; like typhus fever, it may proceed quietly onwards in its mischief, while war like cholera may possibly cause us to look at our case, the awfulness of its results, and to ascertain whence the evil ensues. But with all these opinions, I think it is the duty of every honest man and Christian to beware of giving sanction to a war policy, not rendered necessary for self-defence, nor likely to be beneficial to the interests of humanity at large." . . . "I fear that after all war may be inevitable; I fear it. And mark: if we have entered into any engagements by which we have declared that we will stand by Turkey; if Turkey has taken her present course owing to our advice and our instigation; if we have led her thus far forward with the assurance that she shall have our material aid; if our Government, by secret diplomacy, have in any way guaranteed the national faith and the national honour to enter into this war—then I would say nothing whatever against it. We must certainly fulfil our pledges; we must maintain our honour. But I shall lament, seriously lament, the necessity. I know that it is not popular in this country, but I honour the present (Aberdeen) administration for having done so much and so earnestly to keep the country out of this great calamity. . . . I honour the men who have felt their responsibility so much that they have endeavoured to exhaust all the resources of pacific negotiation rather than involve their country in all the miseries of this conflict. But then, gentlemen, if we are to have a war, my feeling is this: we must go at it vigorously. I don't know anything that is more likely to protract the war than feebleness in the conduct of it in its commencement. It is of no use to hit, unless you can hit hard, and unless you can hit home."

A year later he was again before his constituents, giving an account of his stewardship. It was in January 1855, a few days before Mr. Roebuck's

motion for a committee of inquiry into the state of the army before Sebastopol and the conduct of various Government departments. This motion, it may be remembered, resulted in an overwhelming defeat of the Government, and led to a reconstruction of the cabinet under Lord Palmerston, the principal changes being the resignation of Lord Aberdeen, Lord John Russell, and the Duke of Newcastle.

“What has been the history of this whole affair,” he inquires, “so far as the British army is concerned? Perhaps there has not been any decided neglect on the part of those who were in supreme authority. I can scarcely imagine but that the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of War, that Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War, and all who belong to each of those departments, have laboured earnestly and ingenuously in order to give full effect to the intentions of the people in support of that army; but between them and the army itself there is a system of aristocratic machinery of the costliest kind, which has always been kept up during periods of peace, and which has been kept up at the expense of all efficiency simply in order that those parties who enjoy their posts might reap the advantages—the social advantages—to be derived from their offices, and that that machinery has clogged every movement, has hindered the fulfilment of every generous intention, and has brought to pass a most disgraceful fact in modern history—that an army of thirty or forty thousand men should be perishing of cold and wet and hunger within seven miles of an abundance of supplies. Whose fault is that? It is the fault of a system—a system organised for the benefit of a class, and not for the accomplishment of the object proposed—a system which gives commissions to gentlemen’s sons who can buy them—to gentlemen’s sons who are as gallant and as brave



as any in the field of battle, but who know not how to endure the privations, and to enter into all the petty details of an army administration necessary in a time of war and in the face of an enemy."

Again, ten months later, when Russia had been worsted, and the question before the country was whether or not the struggle should be continued till Russia was humbled and sued for peace, Mr. Miall, addressing his constituents, said :—

"In order that my views of present policy with regard to this great contest may appear reasonable, as well as explicit, it is necessary to bring under notice the object which the people of this country sought to obtain by means of the war with Russia. What thought was in your minds, what emotion filled your hearts, when with such alacrity you drew the sword against the Czar Nicholas? Not military renown, not lust of conquest, not increase of territory, not the gratification of revenge. No; you stood forward in obedience to a generous and noble instinct to protect the weak against the strong. You had watched with growing indignation how might had lorded itself over right in Poland, in Germany, in Italy, in Hungary, and you saw it with its iron hand upon Turkey. But when the northern despot, setting his will above all law, poured his troops into the Danubian principalities, and pounced upon the Ottoman fleet at Sinope, your impatience burst its bounds. 'It is the last straw,' the proverb says, 'that breaks the camel's back.' It was the last insolence of Russia which broke down the British people's preference for peace. The Aberdeen Cabinet was too slow, too temporising for your indignation, and you called upon them to proclaim war. . . . The assault on Turkey was the immediate occasion of the war, but the main object of it, as far as your intentions were concerned, was that the peoples who were strong

enough to wrench their liberties from the hands of domestic tyranny should not be compelled to yield them up at the bidding of an inflated autocrat." The object of the allied governments was different: "their first and immediate object was what they called the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, and their ulterior object was to take from Russia some reliable security that Europe in future should be safe from her aggressive policy."

Pointing out that the Danubian principalities had been evacuated, the Russian protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey virtually abandoned, the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire established, the Russian fleet driven out of the Black Sea, Sebastopol laid in ruins, Russia's factories closed, her commerce paralysed, her ports blockaded, her resources dried up, he contended that the public object for which the war was undertaken had been accomplished, and that there was no good and sufficient reason for an indefinite prolongation of hostilities, but rather for an immediate peace.

The feeling of the country was very strongly influenced about this time by a pamphlet of Mr. Cobden's, entitled, *What Next and Next?* in which the considerations in favour of an immediate conclusion to warlike operations were urged with the clearness and force so characteristic of all his writings and speeches. Moreover, the combatants were all heartily sick of the war, and early in 1856 terms of peace were finally agreed upon and settled at the Paris Conference.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MOTION FOR DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT OF THE IRISH CHURCH—THE “RIVULET” CONTROVERSY.

1856.

Fourth Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society—Irish Church Question—Mr. Miall's Resolution and Speech—Lord Palmerston's Reply and Division—Irish National Movement in Support of Disestablishment—The *Nonconformist* and its Subscribers—Circulation not Proportionate to its Constituency—Mr. Miall's Articles on Free Thought and Intolerance in Religious Communities.

THE fourth Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society which was held at the London Tavern on the 6th May, 1856, had an excellent programme of work for its consideration. The report of the Executive Committee gave clear evidence that the systematic attention which had of late years been given to parliamentary questions of an ecclesiastical character had produced most important practical results. They now felt it incumbent upon them, however, to prepare the public mind for an extensive application of their principles “embodied in a policy marked not “only by comprehensiveness, but by adaptation to

“existing political circumstances.” This was nothing less than a resolution to be moved by Mr. Miall in the House of Commons in favour of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church, and the repeal of all parliamentary grants to religious bodies in that country.

The only occasion on which a similar proposal had ever been made in Parliament was in 1845, when Mr. Sharman Crawford, also member for Rochdale, moved it as an amendment to the Maynooth Endowment Act, and obtained only two votes in addition to the tellers. But so effective had been the preparatory work of the last fifteen years that the disendowment question was now raised to a position which brought it abreast of those which usually influence the choice of electors, and was no longer in the category of sectarian crotchets.

The motion was fixed for the 22nd April. A great naval review at Spithead on the termination of the Russian war led to the adjournment of the House from the 21st to the 24th of that month, and expectation was cheated for the time. A favourable day was however secured a month later, May 27th, and notwithstanding an attempt by a private member to adjourn the House on the pretext that the discussion of such a subject was out of harmony with the peace celebrations which were being held that day, Lord Palmerston was sufficiently courteous to discourage this evasion of the discussion, and Mr. Miall introduced his motion, and spoke for nearly two hours in

support of it. It was recorded in the form of three resolutions before a Committee of the whole House—

I.—That it is expedient to make provision for the application to other than ecclesiastical uses, of all sites, glebes, tithes, rent charges, and estates, at present enjoyed or received by any clerical person of the Protestant Episcopal Communion in Ireland, for the support of Divine worship according to the rites of the said communion, but so as not to affect in any manner existing life interests, and to pay due regard to any equitable claims which may arise out of the secularisation of such property.

II.—That it is expedient to exclude from the estimates annually presented to this House on account of the grant commonly called *Regium Donum*, all sums on account of new congregations, and also to reduce the said grant, and the grant now annually made for the professorships of the Belfast College according as the lives fall in of any persons at present in the receipt of any moneys out of either of such grants.

III.—That the chairman ask leave to bring in a bill to carry these resolutions into effect.<sup>1</sup>

“You may ask me, and you have a right to ask,” said Mr. Miall, “why not let well alone? At a time when religious feuds in Ireland are visibly subsiding, why launch again a question which has stirred such stormy passions? . . . I venture to suggest *in limine* that such interrogations take too much for granted in regard to the present state of feeling in Ireland. . . . It would be childish to shut our eyes to the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spooner had a few weeks previously secured a majority of twenty-six for his resolution in favour of the repeal of the Maynooth College endowment, which my father supported.

obvious fact that it is *only a truce*. Why, sir, the man who walks among explosive materials with a naked candle in his hand has as good right to reckon on complete security, as we have to calculate upon permanent tranquillity in Ireland under our present ecclesiastical policy." "This House, warned by the past, and reasonably apprehensive of the future, may be very properly invited to avail itself of the present interval of popular quiet, to lay the foundation of a more stable order of things." The chief justification of his motion at the present time, Mr. Miall laid in the fact that Mr. Spooner, the representative in the House of a strong anti-Catholic feeling in England, Wales' and Scotland, had obtained leave to bring in a bill for the repeal of the Maynooth College Endowment Act, and should Parliament withdraw a small state endowment from a Roman Catholic institution, the only one granted to that body, how could they hope to maintain the boasted tranquillity of Ireland? It was not physical violence he was apprehending, but the "social devastation wrought by the demon of religious discord." "We have seen how, wherever it fairly gets head, it withers as with a cleaving curse all a nation's best capabilities; how it loosens all the ties by which society is held together; dries up the kindly feelings which spring out of the common relationships of life; weakens mutual confidence; discourages enterprise; checks industrious development; and substitutes for the glow of a healthy national activity, the fever of popular excitement.



It is among the greatest calamities that can befall a nation. . . . But this is the spirit which you must look to see evoked by carrying, as an isolated measure, the disendowment of Maynooth College." He proceeded then by a historical review going back to the reign of Elizabeth to show that each of the three phases in which the Church Establishment might be exemplified—persecution, ascendancy, and indiscriminate endowments—had been seen in Ireland, and the treatment had been invariably unsuccessful. From the time of Elizabeth to the battle of the Boyne, the imperial policy was that of prohibiting, punishing and crushing adherence to, and profession of, any creed and discipline but that which was authorised by the State, and the issue of it all was that, at the time of William III., Protestantism had all the wealth of the country, but Roman Catholicism still retained the affections of the people. From 1689 to 1829 the State Church theory of persecution was modified into that of ascendancy ; the power of the State being applied to the elevation of the Church with which it was united above all others in worldly position, privileges and security. During the last decade most of the penal laws were repealed, and the principle of Protestant ascendancy was condemned by the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. He recalled the declarations of Lord John Russell in 1845 in favour of a principle of indiscriminate endowment which, however, the Protestant feeling of this country would never sanction. "You find

yourself unable," Mr. Miall continued, "to follow up your first tentative step; you are called upon to retrace it. If you should find yourselves compelled by the pressure from without to give practical effect to the demand of the constituent bodies, then the third and last form in which the endowment principle can be applied will have turned out to be inapplicable to the circumstances of Ireland. You will have exhausted the experiment—and then, sir, I would ask, what next?" "I respectfully submit that inasmuch as the divided religious feeling of the country prevents you, and ever will prevent you, from placing the different sects in Ireland upon an equitable footing as it regards the State by means of indiscriminate endowments, you should accomplish it by means of impartial disendowment." He contended that the Imperial Parliament had an undoubted right to deal with the Irish Church "temporalities," and pointed out that by these resolutions he did not ask the House to interfere either with the doctrine, discipline, worship, or government of that Church. Anticipating the objection that it was impossible to deal in the manner proposed with the temporalities of the Irish Church without exposing those of the Church of England to danger, he showed that all those arguments by which the maintenance of the latter is usually justified, might be used in condemnation of the Irish Establishment. "It is not the Church of the majority. It is not the instructress of the poor. It does not live in the affections of the

people. It is connected with no glorious associations. It has ever been as a sharp thorn in the sides of Ireland, irritating and inflaming her whole political and social constitution." "This House may rest assured that the strength of Protestantism does not reside in wealth unjustly obtained, nor in State favour improperly bestowed upon it. I assert that your policy has weakened Protestantism in Ireland by placing it in a false position. You have sent her upon a mission of love in a garb that does not belong to her—a garb of exclusiveness, insolence, and enmity. If she is not heeded, the fault is yours, not hers. You have done your best to render her odious to the population and your mistaken policy has but too well succeeded. Sir, I have faith in her principles, I have faith in her clergy, but I have no faith in your preposterous arrangements on her behalf." In his concluding sentences he sketched out briefly a plan by which the principle of impartial disendowment might be reduced to practice—viz., the vesting of the fund standing in the name of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland for a limited term in a special court, analogous to the present Encumbered Estates Court, which should have at once the powers of an executive commission and a court of equity. After the satisfaction of claimants in respect of life interests, and congregations who had voluntarily expended their own money in the improvement of Church property there would remain in the hands of the court for the benefit of the Irish public, Church


edifices, glebe houses, lands, rents, rent charges, &c. "With respect to sacred edifices, I think perhaps the most satisfactory arrangement would be to leave Protestant episcopal congregations in undisturbed possession of them, and in respect of lands and glebes the court would have the power of sale. The rent charges would constitute the main difficulty, because if left in their present shape it would be necessary to maintain an extensive and costly machinery for their collection. I would suggest that power be given to the landowners to redeem them at, say, ten year's purchase. The whole of the nett property thus accruing to the proposed court by the falling in of life interests, ought, I think, in common fairness to be expended in Ireland. I propose that this property should be made available in the first place for the founding and supporting of infirmaries, hospitals, lunatic asylums, and reformatories, and that what is not required for these objects, should be laid out, under the direction of a board of works, in the construction of piers, harbours, light-houses and quays; in arterial drainage, in deepening rivers, and in such other public undertakings as would best develop the great natural resources of the country."

Lord Palmerston, at the close of the debate, replied briefly and very inadequately to my father's speech, and the numbers on the division were—Ayes, 93; Noes, 163.

Thus was this question of disendowment fairly launched in the British Parliament, to be thenceforth


looked upon and discussed as a practical and equitable measure. It was forthwith relegated to the constituencies, and not to the English and Protestant constituencies alone, but to the Irish Roman Catholics whom it principally concerned. An organisation was formed by the latter during that summer, under the leadership of W. O'Niell Daunt, McCarthy Downing, Mr. Deasy, and other well-known Irish patriots of loyal disposition, and one of their first acts was to offer to my father and the English Protestant Dissenters their hearty co-operation in obtaining the abolition of the Irish Church Establishment by "every legal, peaceful, and constitutional means." The meeting at which resolutions embodying these sentiments were passed with acclamation was an open-air gathering at Clonakilty, Co. Cork, attended by some 12,000 to 15,000 persons, the entire proceedings, according to the *Cork Examiner*, being characterised by a tone and temper very creditable to those who took part in them, and best suited to the occasion and the subject of discussion.

The autumnal meeting of the Liberation Society had special reference to the Irish Church Disestablishment scheme. Mr. Miall spoke at great length, and illustrated his argument with such an array of statistical and historical facts as he might have prepared to support a second appeal to the House of Commons. He found in the *Times* leaders, and even in Mr. Gladstone's utterances on other subjects, ample justification for the course he and his friends



were pursuing. So unequivocal was the testimony of the *Times* to the efficacy of the voluntary principle that it was suspected by some persons that my father himself was a contributor to its columns. "No principle," said that paper, referring to the support of religion in the colonies, "has fair play while it is only half appealed to; but throw yourself entirely upon it and it will respond generously." Said Mr. Miall: "I have taken my position; I have laid down my principle. I say it is a fair one; it is perfectly equitable to all sects; it commends itself to the good sense of every man who will look from a position, may I add, in the language of the *Times*, of common sense and common honesty? And whatever may be the obstacles in my way just now, I feel perfectly convinced that that which I have taken in hand, if not under my guidance, under the guidance of some abler man, will certainly succeed. I tell them that whenever the thing comes to be settled, as settled it must be, they will have to come to my plans in substance if not in form; and I pledge myself to the country that I will persevere in the course upon which I have set out. I took not up this matter lightly; and I intend to press it upon the House of Commons so long as I have a constituency that will do me the honour of sending me there."

*L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose.* The sudden dissolution of Parliament by Lord Palmerston in 1857, as will be seen in another chapter, deprived my father of his seat, and he only resumed parli




mentary life twelve years later, when Mr. Gladstone was carrying his Irish Church Disestablishment scheme triumphantly through the House of Commons.

In a biographical review of my father's work it is difficult to get away from the *Nonconformist*. It is identified with his public course at every turn.

It was somewhat mortifying to him, after fifteen years of unwearied exertions in his editorial capacity, to find that there were some of his supporters who were beginning to betray anxiety lest this close identification should be in any degree impaired. He has to assure the readers of his paper that its management continues in the same hands as heretofore—that the *we* of the *Nonconformist* means what it did on the day of its birth. “We are sensible,” he says, “that a single duty, when it engrosses every thought, may sometimes be more efficiently discharged than when it has given being to a multiplicity of other duties.” In some respects he admits “time has changed him, but in person, in principle, in purpose, in responsibility, he is still the same.” The feeling here referred to was expressed with great candour by a correspondent of the uncompromising sort just about the time when my father was in busy preparation for the introduction of the Irish Church question into the House of Commons. This friendly but exacting critic complained “on behalf of some twelve or fifteen thousand readers” that they had lost the “Editor of the *Nonconformist*,” though the

House of Commons had gained the member for Rochdale. In replying to these strictures the editor is unwillingly drawn to confess and enumerate some of his secret troubles and obstacles.

"For ourselves," he says, "we declare that after pioneering the way to some broad champagne of success, not without some toil, many disappointments, great obloquy, and continued self-sacrifice, the reward has always been snatched from us by some one or other of the sections for whom we have cleared the path. We could name half a dozen journals at least which, as soon as we have rendered a political or ecclesiastical profession easy to journalism, have started up to carry away our harvest, on the plea that there is the shadow of a shade of difference between us. They have adopted, for the most part, our plan and arrangement. They have waved above them the banner of our principles. And if they have not been able to secure for themselves an ample subsistence or a long life, they have sufficed to abstract from us all prospect of surplus power." . . . "Our conclusion after many years experience is this, that the sustained advocacy of advanced opinions by a weekly journal is not a very easy matter, but that it might be much easier and far more effective if all who sympathised with those opinions would exercise but a slight degree of self-denial with a view to support them. But as it has been from the beginning of time, so it is now, the willing horse is always overloaded and beaten. If this journal had been started upon a purely commercial basis, the conductors of it have good right to believe that the power engaged in it might have commanded splendid commercial success. But such success has always been postponed by us to higher considerations. Our very name, which we retained at the request of our readers; many of the items of the intelligence we give, and some that we exclude; our constant reiteration





of the same truths; our determined avoidance of sectarianism; our efforts to subserve principles rather than parties; our steering again and again right against the current of popular opinion—these have done not a little to promote the unselfish object we have at heart, but have necessarily called for large and deliberate sacrifices of commercial prospects. . . . Had the *Nonconformist* enjoyed a *subscribed* circulation at all proportionate to the wide extent of its circle of readers and professed admirers, ample means would have been furnished to multiply the intellectual resources employed in its columns.”

It has before been shown that my father was as much alive to the shortcomings and inconsistencies of Dissenters as to those of the supporters of the Establishment. A signal instance of this was afforded by his manner of treating a miserable theological squabble that arose about this time, and was fanned into the dimensions of a fierce controversy by the heresy-hunting zeal of two Scotch London editors, Mr. James Grant, of the *Morning Advertiser*, and Dr. Campbell, of the *British Banner*. The innocent occasion of this strife was the Rev. T. T. Lynch, a well-known and singularly able and devout minister of the Independent denomination, who compiled a volume of “Hymns for Heart and Voice,” called the *Rivulet*. This little book was approvingly noticed soon after its publication by the *Eclectic* (monthly) *Review*, and the editor of the *Morning Advertiser* replied to the reviewer in a long and abusive article, which, added to his former lucubrations on the subject of Mr. Lynch’s theology,

provoked a protest, signed by fifteen principal London ministers, expressing their utter hatred of the *Advertiser's* mode of dealing with the book and its author, and declaring their love and reverence for the latter. Among the signatories of this protest were Thomas Binney, Samuel Martin, Henry Allon, Newman Hall, Baldwin Brown, Edward White, and others equally honoured. In the meantime Dr. Campbell had joined in the fray, denouncing in a wild incontrollable style peculiar to himself the views held by Mr. Lynch and his friends. The controversy extended, its scope widened, and fears were entertained that it might lead to a serious disruption. For many months a newspaper and pamphlet war waged with increasing bitterness, but the *Nonconformist* steered clear of it, avoiding both record of it and comment upon it, until it had become a public scandal. When, however, my father turned his attention to it, his design was to divert the discussion from the narrow channel it had worn into a much broader current, and to "secure from aggression that prerogative of mind which is to the full as sacred as any with which it is endowed—its freedom to think, examine, and conclude, independently of man's dictation, equally in the spiritual as in the secular sphere." This task was essayed in a series of eight articles which might well be studied now by those who value religious freedom in matters of opinion. Again I prefer to illustrate by example rather than analysis.

“Free thought, even when under the undeniable control of a godly heart, is coming to be treated more and more as a scapegrace brimful of mischief, fanciful, like an ailing child, and devoid of all claim to respect or toleration. Show itself where it will, and in whatever guise, modest as a nun, cautious as a lawyer, calm as the hour of twilight, or suasive as a woman's tongue, there is instantly made a dead set at it. Happy is he who first detects it—he will be everywhere lauded to the skies as not only sound but skilled in the truth. All denominations, probably, can point to more than one celebrity of this order—men whom long practice has rendered expert in detecting a hairsbreadth's variation from the fixed standard of conventional theology—who can scent heterodoxy in the turn of a phrase or in the absence of it, in the substitution of a fresh for a faded idea, or even in the cut of a coat or colour of a necktie, who can discover latent tendencies of a most frightful significance in most unexpected places, who can classify almost every original expression under its appropriate ism or ology, and who know precisely what may be spoken and read within the wide domains of philosophy and religion, without putting in peril the dearest interests of the whole human family. These men are the recognised protectors of their denomination's doctrine, and they scour all the outlying borders of settled thought, like a vigilant police, in search of wanderers who evince the smallest inclination to push their excursive propensity beyond prescribed limits.

“This, however, is far less to be complained of than what follows. We have no very serious objection to this religious patrolling. Perhaps it has its uses as well as abuses. But we must say that deplorable evils have grown out of it. It has come to pass by an almost imperceptible process of action and reaction, that every sect has a sharply-defined boundary line encircling its domain of thought, within which everything is, of course, indisputable, beyond which nothing is recognised. Whatever comes from the other side of the

border, whatever is noticed as having had its birth in the outer wilderness, no matter what may be its own account of itself, nor what credentials it may bring in its own behalf, is at once, not merely suspected, but condemned. Within the charmed pale, people are ashamed or afraid of giving it even such temporary shelter as may be requisite to ascertain what are its pretensions. It is coldly stared at and avoided. There is much shaking of heads at it, and turning of backs upon it. Sometimes discourteousness goes much further invents a nickname for it, and shouts it aloud, flings at it dirt or even harder things, and sets on bystanders to deal forth comminations against it. The worst feature of the case is, that it is not deemed necessary to stand on punctilios when dealing with these reputed aliens. Foul play is all fair when practised against the illegitimate thinking which does not own the sovereignty of sect. You may shuffle with it, you may equivocate, you may do acts which true honour would scorn, you may calumniate, you may be bitter—in a word, you may take every liberty which you deny to the object of your hostility, and when all this misbehaviour is brought home to you, you may safely calculate upon being, not forgiven, but exalted to favour for the zeal you have displayed.”

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“We call upon all good men to unite with us in discouraging within this sacred sphere those noisy, overbearing, vituperative practices which have so fatal a tendency to paralyse sensitive spirits and confuse tender consciences, unfitting them thereby to catch with distinctness the ‘still small voice’ for which they would fain listen. In presence of such majesty and such mystery, it is a desecration to be obliged to hear the propositions of schools, whether old or new, vociferated with rude energy, and enforced upon belief by an unfeeling denunciation of awful penalties. So have we been pestered sometimes while standing beneath the roof of some ancient and magnificent temple and wishing to give

way to the sentiments of veneration which its associations have awakened in our bosom, by the vulgar bawling of a guide or verger whom nothing could persuade to quit our side, and who insisted upon retailing private traditions as though they were only worth attending to in connection with the place. Oh, it is a pitiable case thus to have living thoughts thrust away by dead formulas, and to be compelled to swallow, whether you will or no, crude and hard theories which your soul refuses to digest. We enter our protest against this intrusion upon individualism and liberty. We do not believe in its necessity. We feel no respect for its results. It has made us and kept us children, apt to be scared by every unaccustomed appearance as if it were a spectre. The time is ripe, we think, for a better order of things."

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"We are very far from imagining that it is a matter of indifference what may be the conclusions to which a man may come in regard to religious subjects. We believe it to be of the highest importance both to himself and others. Nor do we hold that in arriving at erroneous convictions he is free from blame. He may, indeed, have been ordinarily conscientious, but perhaps from carelessness, perhaps from the domination over him of some prejudice or egotistic idea, or impetuous passion, he may have neglected to look for truth in some directions; he may have satisfied himself with first and delusive appearances of it in others; he may have taken a wrong turn at a critical juncture, every step beyond which leads him more and more astray, or he may have been influenced in more modes than can be enumerated by a regard to his personal tastes, likings, and even aberrations from rectitude. To the Divine judgment, therefore, which is perfectly competent to detect and estimate the operation of any of these causes, every man will be amenable for his religious opinions, and will receive in regard to them a righteous award.

"But as between man and man the case is different. *We* have no right to assume more than an ordinary amount of moral imperfection as the true explanation of what we hold to be theological errors.

"We are not justified in taking for granted that a higher degree of moral delinquency is implied by the holding of sentiments which we esteem heterodoxy, than we have ourselves been guilty of in deciding upon our own creed . . ."

"Alas, alas! How many men of refined tastes, of generous catholicity, of honest, but perhaps misdirected, aspiration after the true and the divine, have been driven by the annoyances of ignorant zealotry to the very verge of blank infidelity. How many a right-meaning mind seeking wistfully, it may be tearfully, the way to rest, has been met by groups of these champions of sound doctrine, and bidden to turn back to the region he has left behind him in tones of menace which have awakened within him a spirit of defiant and desperate antagonism. How many noble hearts have been hunted from one stage of scepticism to another, until, goaded to madness, they have at last stood at bay, and offered battle to every truth which could approach them. This is, perhaps, the worst, the most lamentable result of those social violations of the right of private judgment which it is our present object to expose.

"To adapt a common phrase to our immediate purpose, they 'drive wise men mad.' They are brought chiefly to bear against the thoughtful and ingenuous, for there is little fear of heterodoxy in the unthinking, and little likelihood of its being professed by the calculating, we mean as a change from orthodoxy, and it is precisely this class that intolerance first assails and ultimately disgusts."

The following letter, written towards the close of 1856, was addressed through one member of the

family to all his brothers and sisters, who were in great sorrow through the sudden death of a brother in the prime of life :—

*To J. H. WILLIAMS, ESQ., Leicester.*

35, ALBERT SQUARE, *November 20th, 1856.*

MY DEAR JOHN,—Having just returned from Southampton, where Charles and I represented the family in paying the last tribute of respect to poor Henry's memory, and having laid his mortal remains in the same grave with those of our dear mother, I thought it might prove some alleviation to the grief of those who could not join us, to receive such detailed information respecting this melancholy event as tended in my own case to divest it of some of its harsher features. I therefore write to you with the request that you will show the letter to our circle at Leicester. . . . It was a comfort to find that during his short illness he was faithfully and affectionately tended, not only by his wife, but by Mr. B——, whose sympathising and self-sacrificing watchfulness was beyond all praise.

As to those higher consolations which the soul longs for in such seasons of bereavement, I am not one who usually looks for them in death-bed expressions nor technical utterances of faith. I do not undervalue them when they appear to me to come from the depths of a spiritual nature—far from it—but I place more confidence in the even tenor of a life, responsive, however imperfectly, to the claims of the Christian revelation. I have had in times past many conversations with Henry on religious subjects, and although we differed in some points in our views he seemed to me to appreciate the main design and drift of the Gospel, and to own even to a greater extent than he would have professed, its practical sway. He was, like most of his family, peculiarly reserved on the subject of personal religion, and had the greatest

horror of cant and hypocrisy. But partialities apart, and in the exercise of my judgment, such as it is, I cannot place him in that category in which I dare say formal orthodoxy would leave him; nor can I believe that he has passed out of life with a total and unalterable incapacity of beholding with satisfaction the Face of our gracious Father. His spiritual nature may have been very imperfectly developed, but that it has never been quickened, or that, now that all material incumbrances have been suddenly removed, it will fail to respond in gladness to the holy love which God in Christ displays, I cannot, for one, believe. Better would it be for all of us, hereafter, to have cultivated with much greater assiduity than we do our spiritual life, than inherit the unspeakable disadvantages of our remissness, negligence, and sloth; but my belief, drawn from Christ's gospel, is that the eternal and holy love will not cease to communicate in eternity as in time as much blessing as man's heart can receive, and I have a consolatory confidence that our brother's soul may gratefully receive much and rejoice in it evermore. It is inexpressible comfort to me to be assured that God's judgment of what He *can* bestow upon the spirit of a man, and therefore of what He *will* bestow, is infinitely above the narrow and technical limits within which man's narrow judgment would confine it. Therefore I assisted in laying poor Henry's body in the grave in *hope* of his resurrection into eternal life. Since his decease abundant and most gratifying evidence has come to light of the affectionate respect with which all his fellow officers, especially his subordinates, regarded him. Six of the Custom House officers, as representatives of the rest, requested and were permitted to follow him to the tomb, and the regret felt for his premature decease is general and deep in the town of Southampton.

On the whole, while we have much to mourn in this sudden visitation, we have also very much to be thankful for. Let us endeavour to be meekly and gratefully submissive. Nor let us repine, as though our God had acted unkindly, but



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trust, as we well may, that although we see not the whole reason of His proceedings, they are, nevertheless, like Himself, holy and unspeakable love.

With kindest love to all, believe me to be,

My dear John,

Yours most affectionately,

EDWARD MIALL.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WORK OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT—"ULTERIOR PURPOSES" OF THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

1857—1862.

Defeat of Bright, Cobden, Gibson, Miall, Fox, Layard, and others, at the Polls—Mr. Miall not Discouraged—Re-election of Bright and Gibson—Defeat of Lord Palmerston on Conspiracy Bill—Mr. Miall Unsuccessfully Contests Tavistock and Banbury—Testimonial at Banbury—The Indian Mutiny—The Duty of Christians in regard to Indian Affairs—A Responsibility not to be Evaded—Efforts of Liberation Society to obtain Religious Equality for India—Church-rates in Parliament in 1858 and 1859—The Lords' Committee of Inquiry—Examination of Mr. Samuel Morley and Dr. Foster and supposed Discovery of "Ulterior Purpose" of the Liberation Society—Church of England Clergymen Preaching at Exeter Hall—Prohibited by Rev. A. G. Edouart—Continued by Dissenters using Anglican Liturgy—Lament of Lord Shaftesbury—Mr. Miall deprecates a *Coup d'État* on the Establishment Question—Changes in Convictions and Sympathies aimed at—Re-action on Church-rates—Sir G. C. Lewis's Census Bill of 1860—Opposition of Dissenters—Religious Clauses Withdrawn—Increasing Influence of Liberation Society due to House of Lords' Committee on Church-rates.

My father's parliamentary career was somewhat suddenly arrested in the session of 1857 by an unexpected turn in political affairs. A motion of Mr. Cobden's, censuring the Government for up-

holding Sir John Bowring's action in China,<sup>1</sup> was carried by a majority of sixteen, and Lord Palmerston appealed from the House of Commons to the country. At the general election thus occasioned, Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, Layard, Miall, Fox, and several other independent Liberals lost their seats. In the case of Rochdale this result was obtained by unfair means. Not only was bribery proved to have prevailed, but some fifty of my father's pledged supporters were considerably forwarded free of expense on the polling day to Southport and Liverpool. The general result of the election, however, was an addition to the numerical strength of the religious equality party of thirty-six votes. My father was not so disheartened by his defeat as were some of his political friends. He deprecated the great stress that was being laid upon the accidental, or, as he preferred to regard it, the providential losses they had sustained. "They are but in the natural course of things," he said, speaking at St. Martin's Hall at a meeting of the Liberation Society; "instead of doing us harm my belief is that they will tend greatly to advance the cause we have in hand. I utter no protest whatever against them. I feel my heart beating as clearly and as robustly in favour of the principles that we hold, and in anticipation of ultimate triumph, as ever I did in my life; and I for one, though I should

<sup>1</sup> The bombardment of the Canton forts in retaliation for an alleged insult offered to the British flag.

be rejected by every constituency in the kingdom, and though the House of Commons should itself prove recreant to the principles of civil and religious liberty which it has taken under its patronage but not under its control, still I should identify the cause with the cause of righteousness, and truth, and God. I identify my soul with it; and though I should suffer personal loss, which I have not, I yet here pledge myself again before the public, that whatever may be the position which Providence may assign to me, that however narrow the sphere to which I may be confined, whatever may be the facilities taken out of my hands—what is left of me I will still employ in the same work—that sphere I will occupy with the understanding that, wherever I am I am determined that this shall be the one great object to which I devote my life."

John Bright and Milner Gibson were in the course of a few months elected for other constituencies, and the latter signalised his return to Parliament by a motion directed against Lord Palmerston's Conspiracy Bill, for which he obtained a majority of nineteen votes in a full House. A Derby administration succeeded, and retained office until 1859, when they were defeated upon their Reform Bill, and another general election ensued, at which Mr. Cobden was elected for Rochdale without opposition.

In the interval between the two elections my father had been nominated for Tavistock and

Banbury, and hotly contested the seat at both places, but was in each case unsuccessful. In the last instance, he confessed to his friends through the *Nonconformist* that he had erred in judgment, and should have resisted the importunate request of his supporters that he would go to the poll. While exonerating them entirely from all blame in making representations that were not borne out by the issue, he reproached himself for having accepted them with such confidence, as he had determined not again to become a candidate unless success were morally certain. His Banbury friends, however, held themselves to have been greatly enlightened and benefited by the speeches on public policy which he had addressed to them, and raised a fund to defray all the expenses of the election, and to present to him a gold watch and chain, value 40*l.*, as a testimonial of their esteem.

The attention of Parliament was mainly given to Indian affairs during the winter session of 1857, and the ordinary session of 1858. The suppression of the terrible Sepoy revolt was immediately followed by the transfer of the administration of Indian affairs from the East India Company to the Crown. My father watched the progress of events with a keen sense of the national responsibility. "Every elector," he contended, "who would conscientiously discharge his trust ought to devote himself" to the study of Indian affairs. "We submit it to our readers as a portion of their daily labour, and not merely as a

recreation. We venture to think that if any of them had it in prospect to go out to India as a magistrate or a missionary, he would acquire within a few months a tolerable amount of correct information regarding the country in which his duty was to be performed. Now each of us virtually incurs the responsibilities of both these offices. We have to rule India and we have to impart to India Christian light. It will be disgraceful, it will be criminal, in us to rest content in our ignorance. If we care not even to know our domain, what right have we to expect that we shall be permitted to keep it?" Feeling that it was necessary that British supremacy in India should be maintained and retained at any cost, he believed also "that the very evil of the means by which we had come into possession of that dependency should bind it upon our consciences not to increase the evil by letting go the possession." "But the possession," he said, "must not be for ourselves—not for the gratification of our lust of power and dominion—not for the extension of our trade—not for the encouragement and patronage of our upper classes of society—not even to put food into the mouths of our working population—important as that may be; but if we hold India we should hold it for the benefit of the inhabitants thereof, and to pay back something of the debt of justice that is due to them, on account of the crimes committed by former Governments and by civil governors."<sup>1</sup> The Liberation Society also for the

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Bolton, May 18th, 1857. .

time being devoted their main efforts to the securing of religious equality for India. In a minute issued by them on this subject it is urged (1), that the Christian religion should be placed in as favourable a light as its intrinsic excellence deserves, by the principles upon which the civil laws of the country are based, and the spirit in which law is carried into effect ; (2), that the Government, while shielding the persons and property of Christian missionaries and evangelists, should carefully abstain from officially identifying itself with them, from establishing ecclesiastical law and making ecclesiastical appointments ; (3), that the fullest liberty of worship and proselytising be given to the natives, their temples guarded from wanton desecration, but that no official slur should be cast upon Christianity, nor official sanction given to idolatrous, impure, or persecuting tenets ; and (4), that no plea of conscience should be permitted to override the plain course of law and equity.

The action taken by the Society was timely, and when the occasion arose for introducing the subject into Parliament, viz., on the passing of Lord Stanley's India Bill, they had made arrangements to bring forward a resolution embodying their views ; but it was found that both Lord Derby in the Upper House and Lord Stanley in the Lower House fully appreciated the worth of these principles when the application of them was politically convenient. "We are content," writes Mr. Miall, "to move behind

“ the scenes, when the results are all or almost all  
“ that we contend for.”

It is interesting to note the signs of progressive enlightenment in reference to ecclesiastical policy which appeared about this period. The history of Church-rates in Parliament for several sessions was a history of successive Bills passed by an increasing majority in the House of Commons. Sir John Trelawney took up the question after Sir William Clay's withdrawal from the House, and obtained majorities of sixty-three and seventy-three in 1858 and 1859. But the Lords were obdurate, and on the motion of the Duke of Marlborough they shelved the proposal for abolition by the appointment of a Select Committee “to inquire into the present operation of the law and practice respecting the levy and assessment of Church-rates.” It was in the course of the examination of Mr. Samuel Morley and Dr. Foster before this Committee that the surprising discovery of the “ulterior objects” of the Liberation Society was made. So long does it take for ideas and purposes industriously taught by one class of persons to travel beyond the particular circle, within the radius of which, the persistency of their iteration is almost wearisome. In the debate on the second reading of Sir John Trelawny's Bill in 1859, Lord Robert Montague obviously prided himself on his astuteness in discovering that Mr. Miall and his coadjutors were seeking the disestablishment of the English Church. “They wish to do away with the




Established Church, so let them not equivocate and cower behind a Church-rate question."

Nor was evidence wanting to show that the Bishops and clergy of the Establishment were reluctantly yielding to the progressive spirit of the times. Not indeed that their liberalism, if such it could be called, took the direction of attributing to political Dissenters any sort of worthy motive, or anything else, in fact, than ungodly and revolutionary designs, but that they were carried by the stream of public sentiment into a broader channel than it was their wont to work in. Thus in the summer of 1857, Exeter Hall, and other public halls in the provincial towns were made use of by the established clergy on Sunday evenings for evangelistic purposes. The surplice, organ, and choir were set aside, and even the prayer-book left at home, with the intent of preaching the Gospel in such a manner as to attract the masses. This movement was commenced by the Evangelical section of the Church. The Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Panmure, Dr. Hugh McNeile, the Bishop of London, Revs. W. Cadman, Hugh Allen, and Canon Miller were among the movers in it. For a short time the scheme progressed smoothly. From the *Nonconformist* it certainly received nothing but sympathy and encouragement. "It is true," wrote the editor, "that in this as in many other methods of modern usefulness they are but following in the wake of the sectaries whose labours they are but too apt to depreciate. . . . We think we discern in

this Exeter Hall experiment the first manifestation of a real vitality which will prove fatal in its expansiveness to many a dead form. . . ." It has been suggested that it was thought by such means as these to extinguish Dissent. "Be it so!" he continues, "We have no objection to a process which can only put down Dissent by pulling down its causes. Others may dread, if they will, the decay of this or that *interest*. We have no such concern. We care for principles, not interests—and the development of those principles, no matter where, yields us unalloyed gratification. We grudge none that success which they attain in an honest calling. We are glad to see Bishops in earnest to battle with sin. They have pulled off their kid gloves and we honour them for it. What if they should go on to lay aside one article after another of ornamental attire until they come to resemble the Apostles indeed! It is the first step, says the French proverb, which is costly. And the *first* step to free Christianity has already been taken."

But in this matter, as far at least as London was concerned, the Church was forced to play into the hands of the Dissenters. At the outset those who originated these services had taken the precaution to ask and obtain the consent of the Rev. A. G. Edouart, incumbent of St. Michael's, Burleigh Street, in whose parish Exeter Hall was situated. In making arrangements to resume them for the winter, they neglected to consult this gentleman, and the



result was a prohibition. The services were, however, continued, but they were conducted by the Revs. W. Brock, Allon, Stoughton, Landels, and other well-known Nonconformist preachers, who so far conformed to the usage of their predecessors as to employ the Anglican liturgy. Lord Shaftesbury attended some of these services, and expressed in the House of Lords the mortification he felt, as he left the hall which had been thronged principally by members of the working classes, who were most devout and attentive. "I confess that I was almost overwhelmed with shame," he said, "to think that the Church of England alone, which is constituted the Church of the realm, and to which such a duty is peculiarly assigned, should be the only body among believers or unbelievers which is not allowed to open a hall with the view of giving instruction to the people."

Mr. Miall took the opportunity offered by the newly awakened interest in the Church question to state as publicly as he could what were the aims and motives of himself and those who were acting with him. "Happily," he said, "they could afford to be perfectly communicative and open. They were not laying up for any surprise; they would not, even if they could, affect that mystery which usually ripened into something like a *coup d'état*. Their intentions if they could carry them into effect to-morrow, but not with the sympathy and the approbation of the great majority of the educated and intelligent portion of their fellow-countrymen—their intentions they

would leave incomplete until such time as they could complete them in concurrence with the views of their fellow countrymen. Their sole object was not so much to change the machinery which they believed to be working such mischief in the country, as to change the spirit by which that machinery was worked. Their end would not be answered by an alteration in the external framework of Church and State, until they had first of all effected an alteration in the convictions and in the sympathies of their fellow men that should lead to that other alteration of which he had spoken.”<sup>1</sup>

No sooner, however, did the whole counsel of the Liberation Society come to be understood than the Conservative element both in the Church and in Parliament gathered strength, and produced the inevitable reaction. This was precisely the result which the leaders of the Anti-State Church movement desired. The great difficulty which they had in the first instance to overcome was that of bringing their principles fairly before the public. “Thanks to the Duke of Marlborough,” said Mr. Miall, “they had been able to speak to the people from high places, and it was almost impossible to over-estimate such an advantage.” Church-defence Associations and Church-rate Committees arose to maintain the rights and privileges of the favoured sect, and to offer a determined resistance to the encroachments of the “Liberationists.” The majority voting against

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Manchester, November 18th, 1859.

Church Rates in the House of Commons, which had steadily increased during the years 1855–1859, from twenty-eight to sixty-nine, now began to diminish, not for lack of consistent support from those who had hitherto voted for the abolition of the rate, but because the Church party were whipping up the waverers and absentees. The majority was reduced by forty-one votes in 1860, and in the two following sessions 1861 and 1862, with the whole voting strength of the House of Commons the result was, in the first case, an equal number of “ayes” and “noes,” and in the second, a majority of one vote in favour of retaining the rate.

In the early part of 1860 Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, then Home Secretary, introduced his Census Bill, a measure prescribing the manner in which a census of the population should be taken for 1861. Ostensibly with the object of obtaining a basis for legislation upon ecclesiastical matters, the Government determined that information should be obtained “under penalty” with regard to the “religious profession” of the population. The design was undoubtedly suggested to the Home Secretary by the Church party, who wished to enumerate as belonging to the Church all persons who were of no religion at all. Whatever may have induced the Home Secretary to introduce the religious clause into his measure, it was deliberately adhered to by the Cabinet. Lord Palmerston himself received a deputation headed by Mr. Disraeli, asking the Government to persevere in

the course they proposed, and he at once intimated that it was their intention to stand their ground. This was no matter of surprise to the Nonconformists, who had already learned that they invariably lost ground when their friends were in power. The administration of Lord Derby was more favourable to them and to the progress of the measures in which they were interested than was that of Lord Palmerston. "The noble lord has shut us up to a single line of action," writes Mr. Miall.<sup>1</sup> "War to the knife with him and with his Government until the obnoxious provision of the Census Bill be withdrawn. War to the knife with every Liberal member who shall abet him in any attempt to carry it through Parliament. . . . We know they can carry their proposal, and we know also that within three months of their carrying it we can make them bitterly rue their treason. Ay, and *it shall be done*." Mr. Miall did not mistake the feeling of Dissenters, nor their power to insure the discomfiture of the Ministry. Here was no sentimental grievance, but a deliberately-planned scheme to override them and to place them at a disadvantage, and in this sense the movement was understood and encountered. It was felt that an inquisition into "religious profession" was an unwarrantable and a needless interference by the State with personal opinion, and that in the conflict which the scheme would necessarily engender, the Church of England, as comprising the aristocracy

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xx. p. 481.

and most of the wealth and political influence of the country would possess an immense advantage. The hierarchy and clergy would regard it as a question not so much of statistics as of dominance, and all the machinery at their command would be likely to be employed to swell the number of nominal adherents of the Church, with a view to retain unimpaired its exclusive privileges, and to perpetuate Church Rates and unjust ecclesiastical restrictions. The organisation of the Liberation Society was readily availed of by the committees of the various denominations in calling public meetings, and giving the requisite information and assistance for petitioning against the Government proposal. A most influential central committee was formed in London, and in the space of a few weeks a formidable opposition was created. A memorial, signed by no less than 171 Members of Parliament, was presented to the Prime Minister, praying him to remove the clause objected to, and so unmistakable was the attitude of Dissenters in the matter that Lord Palmerston at length gave way, and announced in the House of Commons the altered intentions of the Government, which he said were brought about out of deference to the feelings of the Nonconformists rather than assent to their reasoning.

The increased publicity given to the operations of the Liberation Society by the House of Lords Committee on Church Rates, and the events just narrated, had the effect of adding largely to the Society's

constituency. In the year 1859-60 their income was drawn from no less than 517 places, and the subscribers numbered 5,500. The natural result of the continued resistance offered by the Establishment-arians to Sir John Trelawny's Bill for the Abolition of Church Rates, which was introduced session after session, was to draw the eyes of all England to the State-Church controversy. In the House of Commons the Church-rate debates were now conducted by leading statesmen of both parties—by Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli, Palmerston, and Russell—thus insuring for these discussions the publicity which the daily press always accorded to the speeches of parliamentary leaders. It was therefore not wholly disappointing to the supporters of the Liberation Society to find so much stress laid upon the importance of retaining the Church-rate. It is true they conscientiously objected to the tax and sought to have it repealed, but at the same time they avowed their conviction that the ulterior aims of the Society were as much promoted by the continuance as by the cessation of the present agitation.

My father had little hope or expectation of good from the Government of Lord Palmerston, except in the one direction of financial reform. In this department there was ample scope for the genius and enlightened patriotism of Mr. Gladstone. "We know not what his colleagues think of his genius," Mr. Miall writes, "nor how far they have resisted his plans in Cabinet councils—but of this we are



convinced, that, as on two former occasions, so now, he has redeemed the administration from the contempt into which it was fast falling.”<sup>1</sup> My father’s conviction was that until the people of the country were “un-Palmerstonised” there would be no great earnestness in favour of measures of reform. “When a whole country gives itself up to a ‘strong delusion,’ under the influence of which they can almost complacently throw away millions sterling upon armaments of all kinds, not excepting fortifications, at the mere bidding of a popular because ‘plucky’ premier, I am sometimes tempted to suspect that even a large parliamentary reform will hardly go deep enough to cure the evil, and that the first and most important change required is a change in the sentiments, tastes, and, if I may say so, tone of the people.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to his ordinary public work, my father was much occupied during the years 1858–1861 as a member of the “Royal Commission on Education.” This was a Commission appointed in June, 1858, by Lord Salisbury, President of the Council in Lord Derby’s Ministry, to inquire into the present state of popular education in England, and to consider and report what measures (if any) were required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people.

The system of aid and inspection organised by Sir

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xxi. p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the Secretary of Leeds Reform Conference, November 16th, 1861.


J. K. Shuttleworth, and carried on up to that time under the authority of the Privy Council, was obviously experimental, and it had reached such dimensions that the time for deciding on a permanent policy had plainly arrived. It is needless to say that the question had given rise to a long and heated controversy between the friends and the opponents of State education, between supporters of religious schools and secularists, between adherents of the Establishment and Free Churchmen. The Commission was so composed as to give a representative to each of the parties. The Commissioners were the Duke of Newcastle (president), Right Hon. J. T. Coleridge, Rev. W. C. Lake, M.A., Rev. W. Rogers, M.A., Nassau Senior, M.A., Goldwin Smith, M.A., and Edward Miall. My father represented the Nonconformists and Voluntaryists, and as one of his colleagues in the Commission (Mr. Goldwin Smith,) bears witness, he represented them well. "Notwithstanding his other occupations," writes that gentleman,<sup>1</sup> "he bore his full share, during the two years and a half over which the sittings extended, of a very heavy task. He asserted his principles with the clearness and the firmness necessary to obtain for them fair consideration, but with unfailing good temper and urbanity. The Duke of Newcastle, who was the chairman, and who had anticipated discord, was greatly pleased and impressed by his demeanour.

<sup>1</sup> This testimony was communicated to me by Mr. Goldwin Smith, while these pages were going to press, from Toronto.

“vivid and cherished image of a character formed  
“by intense and life-long devotion to a principle, yet  
“entirely free from narrowness or fanaticism, and  
“not only genial but mirthful.”

My father gave to the readers of the *Nonconformist* the following account of the manner in which the inquiry was entered upon and prosecuted by the Commissioners :—

We can speak without any hesitancy on this point, because we have to speak, for the most part, of a majority to whose primary principle on the subject of popular education, we have all along stood, and continue to stand, decidedly opposed. If, therefore, an unfair bias had been allowed to display itself, either in the conduct of the inquiry, or in the inferences drawn from its results, that bias would naturally have shown itself in a manner likely to produce an unpleasant impression upon our minds. The conclusion having gone against us on the most important and most fundamental of all the questions involved in the investigation, we shall hardly be suspected of even unconsciously flattering our own self-esteem when we testify that, in our sober judgment, no public question has ever been inquired into with more judicial impartiality. We have reason to believe that the Duke of Newcastle consented to preside over the Commission only on the understanding that its work should be *bond fide*, and that it should not sit with a view to any foregone conclusion. On this understanding he selected for his colleagues gentlemen known to represent widely different views on the subject of education, especially in its relation to the State. We rejoice in being able to offer our testimony to the fact that, from first to last, every one of them displayed the same spirit of fairness. The most scrupulous care was evinced on all occasions to give fair play to all sides on every controverted point—to seek the most trustworthy evidence in whatever



quarter it was to be had, and by whatever agency it could be best obtained—and to give it, when collected, the most unprejudiced consideration. Of course, the inquiry was pursued by men who had already formed decided opinions upon all its salient points; but those opinions, so far as we had an opportunity of judging, were never allowed to colour the temper or spirit in which the investigation was conducted.

The inquiry extended over nearly three years, during which time the meetings were considerably over one hundred in number, occupying on an average four hours a day. The report was presented in March, 1861. It was, in its general tenor, and taken in connection with the five volumes of evidence which formed an appendix, an unequivocal testimony to the immense value of the voluntary schools then existing. But the recommendations of the majority were not such as my father could personally endorse, involving as they did the principle of State interference and support. On the crucial question of religious inspection, the majority were in accord. A long discussion on this point extended over two or three days, and the conclusion arrived at was that it would be better for the Government Inspectors not to make any examination in religious knowledge. My father's own course was thus described by himself at a meeting of the Voluntary School Association.

“Having accomplished this much, it was necessary for me to determine whether I would put my name to that report or no. Here was a practical plan for

the extension of rendering permanent government support and assistance. I thought that as I had worked with the Commission during a period of three years, as I was put upon the Commission with the full knowledge of my fellow commissioners that I advocated the voluntary principle in education, as I had never concealed my sentiments there, and as I fairly brought the matter to discussion and a vote, in which I, and I may say a minority of the Commission, were beaten ; that it would have been, not only something like prudery, but somewhat unfair, to have used such influence as an individual might use to guide and to mould the decisions of the Commission, if I did not take my share of the responsibility at the end, taking care, however, that the public should well understand that I did this, or rather that those who did it, the minority, did it in the second resort, and not because they believed that the principle of governmental support of education was itself sound."

The minority, consisting, I believe, of Mr. Goldwin Smith and Mr. Miall, contented themselves therefore with placing upon record their own views in the following terms while fixing their names and seals to the Commissioners' Report :—

"The minority admit that the responsibilities and functions of Government may be enlarged by special circumstances, and in cases where political disasters have retarded the natural progress of society. But they hold that in a country situated politically and socially as England is, Government has, ordinarily speaking, no educational duties, except toward those whom destitution, vagrancy, or crime, casts upon its hands. They make no attempt at this distance of time to estimate the urgency of the circumstances which

led the Government of this country to interfere in popular education. They fully admit that much good has been done by means of the grant, though they think it is not unlikely that more solid and lasting good would have been done, that waste would have been avoided, that the different wants of various classes and districts would have been more suitably supplied, that some sharpening of religious opinion in the matter of education would have been spared, and that the indirect effects upon the character of the nation, and the relation between class and class, would have been better had the Government abstained from interference, and given free course to the sense of duty and the benevolence which, since the mind of the nation has been turned from foreign war to domestic improvement, have spontaneously achieved great results in other directions. These members of the Commission desire that a good type of schools and teachers having been extensively introduced, the benefits of popular education having been manifested, and public interest in the subject having been thoroughly awakened, Government should abstain from making further grants, except grants for the building of schools, to which the public assistance was originally confined, and the continuance of which will be fair towards the parishes which have hitherto received no assistance, that the annual grants which are now made shall be gradually withdrawn, and that Government should confine its action to the improvement of union schools, reformatories, and schools connected with public establishments, at the same time developing to the utmost the resources of the public charities, which either are, or may be, made applicable to popular education, and affording every facility which legislation can give to private munificence in building and endowing schools for the poor. It appears to them that if the State proceeds further in its present course, and adopts as definitive the system which has hitherto been provisional, it will be difficult hereafter to induce parental and social duty to undertake the burden which it ought to bear, or to escape

from the position, neither just in itself nor socially expedient, that large and ill-defined classes of the people are entitled, without reference to individual need, or to the natural claims which any of them may possess on the assistance of masters and employers, to have their education paid for, in part, at least, out of the public taxes. Nor do they feel confident that Government will ever be able to control the growing expenditure and multiplying appointments of a department, the operations of which are regulated by the increasing and varying demands of philanthropists, rather than by the definite requirements of the public service. They have felt it their duty, however, to regard the question as it stands after twenty-nine years of a policy opposed to their own; and on the rejection of their own view, they cordially adopt, in the second resort, the scheme of assistance approved by the majority of their colleagues, which they regard as better in every respect, and above all, as a far nearer approach to justice, than the present."

It was in the same spirit, and with the same expectation of accruing benefit, that my father gave his general adhesion to the main scheme embodied in the Education Act of 1870, to which reference will be made in a succeeding chapter.

The publication of a book which has since become quite a *vade mecum* with Liberation Society lecturers, and has been the means of provoking much hand-to-hand fighting, belongs to this period. The "Title Deeds of the Church of England to her Parochial Endowments" was based upon a most careful and painstaking search into original authorities, the result of such study being given week by week, in the first instance, in the columns of the *Nonconformist*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SIGNS OF A COMING HARVEST.

1862—1866.

1862: A New Start—The Editor Obtains Full Possession of his Own—The Bicentenary Commemoration—Sixth Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society—Speech by Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A.—Presentation of a Testimonial of £5,000 to Mr. Miall—Speech by Mr. Bright—Mr. Miall Reviewing his Own Course—Insufficient Materials for Delineating Mr. Miall's Private Life—*An Editor off the Line*—Rev. Christopher Nevile—Goldwin Smith, M.A.—Intercourse with Church Laymen—A New Electoral Policy Sketched—Conferences at Principal Towns. 1865: The Liberation Society Coming of Age—Mr. Miall's Review of Past Progress—Reform in the Air—Apprehensions of Turbulence—Mr. Disraeli's Reform Act, 1867—Conferences in North and South Wales.

THE year 1862 marks an epoch in my father's public life. His journal in that year attained its majority. This circumstance, in itself insignificant, was attended by others that could not but materially affect his purpose. A few months ago he had written:—"Few and far between are the days of "sunshine for the Liberation Society now, and when "they come they are short. Darkness predominates; "keen winds are blowing; dreary prospects are before us; nothing seems to grow, and all our "pleasant plants, nipped by the frost, have died "down to the roots; all but one hardy perennial,




“and even that is threatened. But the season of “winter is as natural and as necessary as is that of “summer or autumn, and if grateful to us for no “other reason it is for this—that it is always “followed by a fresh spring.” The spring was now at hand, and it found him in the humour to utilise to the utmost its fertilising elements. Who can resist the contagion of joyousness revealed in the following outburst :—

“We mean to consecrate our joy. The delight, the expansion of heart, the welling up within us of new life, consequent upon finding ourselves in unfettered possession of the instrument which we fashioned for use twenty-one years ago, and by means of which we have done what we have done towards laying the basis of a wider religious liberty than any which is possible under the existing relation of the Church to the State, can find adequate expression only in a thoroughly earnest attempt to make that instrument greatly more efficient for its object. To throw into the *Nonconformist* the utmost intellectual and moral force which we can command, to adapt it as an exponent of glorious principles to the altered conditions and demands of the times ; to place it at the head of the newspapers to which it belongs, in all those qualities which are likely to aid in furthering the grand result for which it was started, and for which, during its earlier years, it laboured alone, is the achievement towards which our thoughts, our desires, our deliberations, our efforts, stimulated by the happy liberty we have recently acquired, tend with all the warmth, intensity, and force of a new love.” . . . “We are bent upon infusing fresh spirit into all its departments—in a word, to take our departure from a new

beginning. We look forward to the course we have marked out for ourselves with a spring of hope and joy similar to that which impelled us when the *Nonconformist* originally entered upon its career."

Business arrangements which had from time to time been made with the view of insuring to the editor entire freedom from pecuniary responsibility and from anxiety in reference to the publication department of the paper, had for years past, from one cause and another, introduced more evils than they had cured, and it was with unusual satisfaction that he found himself able at that juncture to commit the business management to the present writer.

In the sphere of ecclesiastical politics he anticipated something like a revival of interest in Free-Church principles from the very widespread determination on the part of Nonconformists to turn to profitable account the Bicentenary Celebration of the ejection of 2,500 clergy from their livings in 1662. As to the manner in which this great historical event was actually celebrated there is no occasion to write here at any length. It need only be remarked that the title of Dissenters to claim spiritual kinship with these worthies of the Church of England was stoutly denied by the Church defenders of the day, with the natural result of opening up in fresh places and with immensely added interest the great controversy of State interference in matters of religious profession and opinion, and hastening the time when it should



be deemed essentially a practical thing in a Christian country to legislate upon principles of religious equality. One section of the Congregationalists determined to give effect to their views in the erection of a Memorial Hall and additional places of worship throughout the country, and in the preparation of an historical volume ; while others, uniting various denominations, devoted themselves more especially to the circulation of essays, and delivery of lectures in exposition of the fundamental truths witnessed to by English Protestant Nonconformity. To the latter my father gave all the assistance in his power. Their method was more in accord with the character of his own work, and promised results which to his mind were more valuable than denominational extension.

“It is not so much for what we shall do this “year,” he writes, “as for what we shall be—what “we shall make of ourselves—the discipline and “training which will fit us for high enterprise in “future. We trust to witness a most gratifying “alteration of the prevailing *tone* of modern Non- “conformity. We care not to push it at once into “public action. That will be easy enough when “once the right spirit is nursed into vigour. And “this will be the special duty of the year—by com- “munion with the spirit of 1662 to beget a corre- “sponding spirit in the men and women of 1862.”<sup>1</sup>

The sixth Triennial Conference of the Liberation

<sup>1</sup> *Nonconformist*, vol. xxii. p. 2.

Society, held early in the year, was also in every respect full of encouragement. Although the report of the Executive Committee contained the admission that the limits of concession to Nonconformists by the Legislature appeared to have been reached, it also remarked that public opinion had been changed by the work of the Society, and that the separation of the Church from the State was now entertained as an idea capable of being realised. With reference to the preparations which were being made in various quarters for the Bi-Centenary celebrations, the Committee looked forward to them with eager expectation, while deciding it was expedient that on others rather than on them should devolve initiatory measures for such a commemoration. "They have seen with joy," it states, "the determination of almost all sections of Nonconformists to combine with homage to the heroism of two centuries ago, some service to the cause of truth and righteousness in the present age. Except in so far as its past labours have exercised a preparatory influence, this Society cannot appropriate to itself the praise of such a demonstration, but, unquestionably, it hopes to secure, as the result, no inconsiderable increase of moral power. It may excite the ire of the Established clergy that attention should be called to the inconsistency of their public teaching with their solemnly-professed belief. It may lead some of them still further to separate themselves from their fellow Christians in other communities; and

“ it may increase the bitterness of those who cling  
“ to their political privileges, and to their superior  
“ social status, with not unnatural tenacity. These,  
“ however, will be but slight evils in comparison  
“ with the suppression of honest convictions in  
“ matters affecting the purity of Christ's Church,  
“ or in comparison with the lasting good to be  
“ effected by the wise use of a great and rare  
“ opportunity like this.”

The position of the Society, their singleness of aim and integrity of purpose, were getting to be better understood. This was evident from the utterances of many influential members of the Church of England, and it gave to the public meetings of the Society this year additional force and interest. Mr. Dale of Birmingham, who was less closely associated at that time with the work of the Society than he became some years later, expressed admirably the character of the work which was being slowly but surely accomplished by their agency.

“ I believe,” he said, “ the real explanation of the effect which the Liberation Society is said to produce upon public movements in this country is that there is something deep down in the heart of Englishmen that responds to your appeal. The great element of your power is this, that the old English spirit is after all on your side, and above all things in this age of increasing religious activity, there must be a conviction deepening and strengthening in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of our countrymen who stand aloof from our public movements, that the true way

of serving Christ, is to serve Him with a true heart and loving spirit under the control of His own laws, and not under the influence of any human government. I beg to offer this as an explanation to the members of the Church Defence Associations all over the country, who envy your genius, and who would be glad to copy your machinery in order that they may rival your results. . . . In a man's life a vast deal of what he does cannot be written in a biography. There are a great many slight actions which day by day tend to give certain features to his character, and to infuse certain elements into his moral and social influence which cannot afterwards be recovered and cannot be recalled, and so there are a thousand things done by this Society or its agents month after month, which cannot be put into a report. You cannot tabulate these things. They have been done and cannot be recalled; and I have had opportunities, during the last year or two in Birmingham, to see the amount of work which the agents of the Liberation Society have been doing from time to time, and I can frankly declare that the knowledge I have derived both of the spirit in which this work is done, of the character of the work itself, and of the ability with which, at any rate in our neighbourhood, this work is carried on, has greatly strengthened my faith in the Liberation Society, and my desire for its prosperity."

On the day following the Liberation Society's meetings, a crowded meeting was held in London at the Freemasons' Hall to present to my father an address accompanied by a testimonial consisting of five thousand pounds in money and a service of plate. This purpose had been formed in the latter part of 1861, and was no sooner suggested than it

was in train for fulfilment. A general committee consisting of 300 gentlemen, residing both in London and the provinces, was formed, and communications were addressed to Nonconformists far and wide to contribute to the fund.

The Address, which was followed by the inscription of the names of fifteen hundred subscribers, referred to the efforts which Mr. Miall had made to "indoc-trinate the public mind with juster and broader views both of the true nature of the Church and the true province of the State," expressing also the conviction of the subscribers that to his teaching and influence in a very great degree it was owing, that Protestant Dissenters in this country had come to be felt and acknowledged as a distinct political power which no party could afford to ignore. They also, while thankfully acknowledging the past, desired by this testimonial of their regard to encourage his heart and strengthen his hands, and, if it might be, increase his influence. Mr. Bright, who spoke of deriving a pleasure from the occasion which he thought had not been exceeded by that afforded at any other public meeting he had ever attended, bore a testimony to Mr. Miall's character and influence such as it is rarely given to any man to receive from the lips of one so good and great; blending with his own meed of praise the estimate of his friend's character which the Duke of Newcastle had expressed in Mr. Bright's hearing when he had spoken "of his courtesy, of his moderation, of his

liberality, of his sound judgment, and of his laboriousness, in language, at least, as eulogistic as anything that you have heard on this platform to-night."

I am sure it is no partial or biassed judgment that leads me to declare my father to have been more free than most men from susceptibility to flattery or even to the just praise of his fellows, and it has been a question with me whether if his feeling could have been consulted, such details as the foregoing would not have been withheld. But they seem to me to be strictly relevant to the purpose of a biographical record such as this, and will not, I hope, be read in too critical a spirit.

"What can I say," said Mr. Miall, "in response to the too eulogistic address, and truly munificent gift which you have just presented to me? Strong—I may almost say overwhelming—emotions cannot be adequately expressed, and yet with the calmness that is suited to a public occasion like the present. I cannot show you all my heart. I dare not trust myself to attempt it. I must leave you to imagine how full it is, and content myself with the utterance of my desire and my belief that the deep spring of gratitude which your goodness has unsealed, may never be exhausted as long as life remains. First let me render heartiest thanks to Him, the spirituality and therewith the unity, the peace and the power of Whose kingdom upon earth I have humbly sought to promote. Whatever of mine has tended to good has been derived wholly from Him. For whatever of evil attaches to anything I have done, I humbly ask His forgiveness. If I have been able through my course to maintain



my profession consistently, I owe it entirely to His goodness. Through two-and-twenty years, or nearly so, of various public labour He has kept me, encouraging my best motives, and holding in restraint my worst. If my efforts have been to any extent useful to others or honourable to myself, here and now, from the inmost depths of my soul, I disclaim the praise. I give it unto Him." . . . "The peculiarity of my position," he went on to add, "has been such that a great part of the good repute that has lighted upon me is fairly owing to others who have laboured with me." . . . "Mine is but a representative name and fame; others have worked for it, and in their several departments have worked more efficiently than I could have done."

Speaking of the *Nonconformist*, he said: "If the *Nonconformist* newspaper has indeed rendered any service in placing in a more commanding and a higher position, the principles of religious equality, then I think it must be mainly owing to the concurrence of two or three causes which I shall proceed to mention. In the first place, that was the sole object for which the paper was established, and from the issue of the first impression on April 14th, 1841, down to the last impression issued to-day, that object has been studiously and most carefully considered in order that it might give its tone to the whole of the journal. In the second place it has been my constant aim to prosecute the object to which I have already adverted upon national and not upon party or sectarian grounds. In the third place, inasmuch as the realisation of our object must of necessity be accomplished by a political process, I have regarded it as hardly a secondary, certainly not a trivial part of my duty to be as earnest, as careful, as exclusively governed by my convictions of truth, and my sense of right in the exposition of political as of ecclesiastical principles."

It is not without disappointment, which probably some readers of this memoir will share, that I find myself restricted almost wholly to a representation of the public life of my father. Had he been accustomed to write frequently, or even at intervals, with any degree of fulness, to members of his family or to dear and intimate friends, upon subjects which engrossed his thoughts, or in which his personal interest centred, it might have been otherwise. He was however too busy a writer for the press, to be at the same time a good correspondent, so that apart from the printed page, the sources of information accessible to the biographer, whether in reference to character or incident, are of the most meagre description.

Of those relating to character I prefer to let his actions and the record of them speak. Were I, however, to constitute myself judge or critic, I should say only that which reverence, affection, and strong sympathy of feeling and conviction would dictate. No one who has formed part of his household, but would join in testifying that the Christian idea of life and duty which he steadfastly inculcated as a public teacher, and in relation to matters of public concern, was precisely that which both by example and precept, he exalted in family and social life. There was also a geniality, a love of humour, a relish for relaxation, or "kicking over the traces" which could hardly be indicated by writings of the order to which for the most part he was limited. In a series of essays published in 1865

entitled *An Editor off the Line, or Wayside Musings and Reminiscences*, these and many other traits of character are unmistakably revealed. Here in writing upon such familiar topics as "Dusty Roads," "Drizzle," "Beggars," "Children," "Tradesmen's Carts," "Mountain Scenery," he shows himself as the many-sided man, reflective, observant; bringing out of the stores of memory, and culling from every-day experiences, treasures of wisdom and humour.

Mr. Miall was at this time (1864) about 55 years of age—not much past his prime as the years of a man's life are ordinarily reckoned; but he was beginning to lack something of the buoyancy and spontaneous enthusiasm of his earlier years. Not that he was a whit less in earnest, or felt any shadow of doubt as to the ultimate issue of the conflict in which he was engaged. Nothing would have been so congenial to his natural disposition as to have withdrawn altogether from public life, and to spend his later years in rural seclusion. The best compromise within his reach, committed as he was to the responsibility of newspaper editing, and to a full share of the burden of directing the policy of the Liberation Society, was a small house with a well-sheltered garden at Forest Hill, which he took upon a long lease, hoping that the strain of mental work would in future be so far lightened as to allow of some relaxation in the contemplative study of natural objects, and in his favourite pursuit of reading. The prospect of resuming Parliamentary work was one

which he regarded without any strong desire, content to wait the turn of events and the indications of Providence. He cherished the hope that he should live to bring before Parliament the whole question of disestablishment in its widest bearings; and this hope, it will be seen, was realised in 1871: but for the present, and for several years to come, his work was to assist in preparing the public mind for a dispassionate consideration of the subject. Among those with whom similarity of aim and association in public work had brought my father into close intimacy were Professor Goldwin Smith and the Rev. Christopher Nevile, the latter a clergyman, who, in 1862, gave up two livings in Nottinghamshire worth 700*l.* per annum because he could not conscientiously remain in the communion of the Church of England, and who at this time was losing no opportunity "of speaking *the truth* to the best of his ability, and thus atoning for a life of error."<sup>1</sup> Numerous were the efforts made by Mr. Nevile to bring my father into contact with Church dignitaries or politicians of a different school to his own, in order that the State Church question might be discussed between them in the freedom of social intercourse. Other opportunities of associating himself with Churchmen in the prosecution of his work were presented to my father in the movement for the repeal of religious tests on taking academical degrees at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, which was ultimately carried to a

<sup>1</sup> Letter to *Stamford Mercury*, March, 1863.

triumphant issue, mainly through the efforts of "Oxford" men, whose open-mindedness and well-directed zeal filled him with admiration, and made it a pleasure to him to co-operate with them.

The reactionary tendency of recent Parliamentary voting on measures of an ecclesiastical character induced my father to "leave caring" for immediate results, and to sketch out a new electoral policy for Nonconformists, which should have the effect of securing a better representation of their principles in the new Parliament. Briefly, the recommendation was as follows :—

That as there was so little practical difference between the politics of Lords Derby and Palmerston, support should henceforth be given to the Liberal party only in proportion and as an equivalent was rendered in the support afforded to principles believed to be of paramount importance; that ultimate rather than immediate gain should be sought; and that there should be a determination to make all the sacrifices, and to bear all the reproaches, which might be needful for infusing into the creed of what was becoming a dead Liberalism a principle of life which would energise it for the inevitable struggles of the coming future. It was at the same time suggested that however decided the policy adopted, it should be applied with circumspection, moderation, and practical sagacity, regard being had to the electoral strength of

Voluntaries in each constituency, so that in the choice of candidates, or in the refusal to support them, more should not be asked than the claimants had a right to demand.

This line of action, heartily accepted by the friends of the Liberation Society, specially convened in London in the autumn of 1863 to deliberate upon it, was thereupon urged upon the more advanced section of the Liberal party in all the constituencies. The populous centres of Manchester, Bristol, Leicester, Plymouth, and Norwich, were selected as rallying points, at which conferences were held for the purpose of discussing the policy thus inaugurated. Mr. Miall introduced the subject on each occasion by the reading of his paper, which in every instance led to an animated debate, concluding with resolutions committing those present to the adoption of the proposed plan of action.

There was no exaggeration in the declaration of a Church writer of that day,<sup>1</sup> that "the Liberation Society was never beaten." "Its organisation," . . . continued the writer, "was brought to bear upon any simple question with all the promptitude and precision of a veteran battalion." Twenty years have passed since this opinion was expressed, and there is no sign to-day that the Society is shorn of its strength. Events have clearly shown that its decisions have been, if less immediately, not less certainly, ratified by the popular voice, and written

<sup>1</sup> Masheder's *Dissent and Democracy*. 1865.

upon the Statute-book, than those of the only great organisation of modern times that can compare with it in the range of its influence—the Anti-Corn-Law League. The Conferences, triennially held in London, have been always attended by men well accustomed to face difficulties—men who have seen many a “silly crotchet” of to-day become the practical and even the burning question of to-morrow.

In 1865 the Society came of age, and my father very appropriately presided over the Conference held in that year. Looking back over the ground they had travelled since 1844, he reminded his audience that from first to last the true and ultimate object of the Society had not for a moment been lost sight of:—

“I will not claim for them” (he said) “what their antagonists have again and again spontaneously conceded, that the course they have pursued has been characterised by a far-reaching forecast and sound practical wisdom. Whatever credit may be supposed to be fairly due to them has been earned by much humbler qualities. They do not pretend to have originated a single, simple, comprehensive plan, by a strict adherence to which they have hoped to carry their end, as by assault. But they have keenly and patiently watched opportunities, and eagerly seized them as they appeared. They have closely followed the leading of events. Every step they have taken has been suggested to them by an imperative necessity, an obvious want, or an apt and inviting occasion. Such progress as they have achieved has in reality been achieved under the guidance of Divine Providence. The only generalship of which they can boast is that of having availed themselves of every advantage which the nature of the ground presented, and of never retreating save

with a view to a more successful advance. They have striven to adapt their movements to the actual state of things with which they have had to deal. Possibly the effect might have been grander if they had obeyed the impulse within them that cried out, 'On to Richmond!' They have not done so. They meant all along to get to Richmond, but they have discerned clearly enough that the obstacles to be surmounted were real and palpable, not imaginary. They spent upwards of six years in collecting, instructing, disciplining, and organising their own forces, and in creating and ascertaining that amount of moral preparedness which would warrant a serious encounter. Their first Parliamentary attempt was an extremely modest one, but it was one in which they were convinced they must succeed before they could go further. It was to get rid of the grant of about 2000*l.* a year which, under the misleading name of *Regium Donum*, was doled out by the State to poor Dissenting ministers in England and Wales. They did not originate the Parliamentary movement for the abolition of Church Rates—it fell into their hands, and they made what they could of it. They did not select for their attack the Clergy Reserves in Canada—but when the question was introduced by Lord John Russell, they exerted themselves to get it honestly and not delusively settled. They did not propose University Reform, but when it was proposed, without any provision for the admission of Nonconformists, they forced upon the Government a clause to that effect, first in the Oxford and afterwards in the Cambridge Bill. They did not moot the subject of new cemeteries, but they compelled Lord Palmerston, who did, to recognise to some considerable extent the rights of the Free Churches in the matter. And so of many other Parliamentary contests in which they have been engaged, which in truth could not have been avoided even if it had been thought desirable that they should. Theoretically, a plan might have been chalked out which would have taken no account of them. Practically, the plan must have been set aside by immediate and pressing exigencies. I repeat it, the general drift of the



policy has followed the course of events, and has been Providentially determined for, rather than by, the choice of the Committee. And what has been the result? Has the ultimate object of the Society been intercepted from public notice by these minor conflicts? Let any man who was present at the first Conference contrast the state of the public mind as it then showed itself with what it is now. Does any statesman worthy of the name misconceive or misdescribe the end at which we aim? Is either House of Legislature in ignorance or doubt as to the precise nature of our intentions? Are the bishops, the archdeacons, or the clergy generally, in the dark as to the object at which we are driving? Does not the newspaper press show as precise a knowledge of the gist of the controversy as we ourselves possess? Do we need now to inform public opinion as to what we do not contemplate as distinguished from what we do? Is our movement tending to narrow, sectarian, or false issues? Is not the issue towards which it is manifestly making progress, marvellous progress, broad, national, religious? To what is this owing? Not to the transcendent wisdom of those who have been intrusted with the guidance of the Society's affairs, but to the force of that irresistible current of events of which the Committee have sought to take advantage. They have acted all along on the principle that 'to obey is better than sacrifice': to do present duty, and to do it well, is likelier to lead to large results than to neglect it for the sake of trying what might appear to them and to others a bolder and more heroic line of policy. And I venture to think they have had their reward, and that a well-defined knowledge of their ultimate purpose has been more successfully diffused by their efforts in connection with practical measures, minor though they be, in which men take a lively interest, than it could have been by prematurely pushing into Parliamentary discussion their whole purpose in a form which, on account of its very remoteness, would hardly have engaged serious attention."

One cannot look back over twenty-one years, after middle life, without seeing many a place vacant that was once filled by those, the loss of whom makes us the poorer. When my father girded on his armour, he was surrounded by veterans who had fought on other fields. It was no army of raw recruits that was banded together in 1844 to enter upon the Anti-State Church campaign; and still less could it be expected that after a lapse of twenty-one years, in such an assembly as that over which he was presiding, grey hairs should be seen only here and there. It was a thought harmonising well with the feeling of the assembly, to begin the proceedings by "communing with the dead."

"At the Conference of 1844," said Mr. Miall, "six gentlemen successively occupied the chair, of whom one only, our venerable, constant, invaluable friend, Dr. Ackworth, survives. We miss the beaming countenance of John Burnet, who presided over the first sitting, and whose kindly and playful humour, robust intellect, unswerving allegiance to truth, unpremeditated eloquence, and broad catholicity, have made his memory fragrant to the Free Churches of the United Kingdom. Dr. Andrew Marshall of Kirkintilloch, whose name is inseparably associated with the origin of the voluntary movement in Scotland; the large-hearted, sober-minded, able, and pious Dr. Young of Perth, who also had taken a prominent part in the same controversy; John Dunlop of Brochloch, whom Edinburgh yet remembers with affectionate regard; and the genial, cultivated, much-loving and much-loved Dr. Cox of Hackney, filled in turn the chair on that occasion; and of all of them it may be said, 'They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' Of

those who took part in the proceedings of that Conference, we have lost several to whom, while living, we looked up with respect and confidence, and upon whom, being dead, we look back with emotions akin to veneration. Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow was not, indeed, personally present, but he forwarded for the instruction of the Conference the first of the papers read before it. Dr. John Pye Smith of Homerton addressed the assembly. Dr. Adam Thomson was with us in the full vigour of his masculine intellect; as were also Dr. Ritchie, whose sturdy commonsense was twined with sportive pleasantry; Dr. Hutton, who, gentle as a child, stood by his convictions with the firmness of a rock; and the Rev. Robert Eckett, President of the Association of Methodists. But there were many, besides ministers of the Gospel, upon whose tombs our mourning affection will fondly place its *immortelles*. Joseph Sturge, the most unselfish and the truest philanthropist of his time; Sharman Crawford, the upright and courageous politician; John Childs, honest, faithful, and energetic in all he undertook; Edward Swaine, Apsley Pellatt, James Richardson of Leeds, and Josiah Conder; and last, but not least, Robert Norris of Bristol, calm and genial in spirit, and bold as a lion in his loyal service to truth. Besides these, although not present at the Conference, yet holding a seat on the first Executive Committee, we proudly recall the names of Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, Dr. Payne of Exeter, Mr. George Offor of Hackney, and Mr. John Maximilian Webb of Streatham. The thought of our departed friends will, no doubt, deepen our sense of responsibility in carrying forward that enterprise in the origination of which they so largely shared, and we shall feel as if their spirits were present with us on this occasion. Gentlemen, the spoils which death has gathered from that assembly have been ample and rich; but, thank God, at no time during the career of the Society have there been wanting good men and true, ready to step forward and be 'baptised for the dead.'"

Parliament was dissolved in the summer of 1865, and was followed in a few months by the death of Lord Palmerston. There were isolated instances in which the determined stand made at the elections by the "Liberationists," in conformity with the plan already agreed upon, led to the rejection of a good candidate, but the total result of loyalty to their leaders was undoubtedly to consolidate the Liberal party. At Exeter it deprived the new Parliament for a time of the services of J. T. Coleridge, who could not be induced to pledge himself to vote for the abolition of Church Rates, but it materially helped to give the Liberal administration a larger majority than they had in the previous Parliament. In fact, the onward movement of the mind of the country, so far from having been arrested by the timely insistence upon the rights of religious equality, "had carried those rights along with it, and promised to bear them forward to legislative triumph."<sup>1</sup>

The year 1866 brought to a clear and final issue the various parties who were concerned either in promoting, obstructing, or resolutely opposing Parliamentary Reform. The death of Lord Palmerston removed from Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone the last obstacle to a resolute and comprehensive treatment of the subject. A Bill was brought in during the session of 1866, but owing to the defection

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Miall's speech at Manchester, November 22, 1865.

of Mr. Lowe and a following of some forty Liberal members, the Government was defeated by a majority of eleven votes in a House of 624 members, and at once resigned.

Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli again took office, and their accession to power was immediately followed by popular demonstrations in favour of Reform. My father was still as earnest an advocate for the extension of the suffrage as in the earlier part of his career, but he was a lover of order, and had more faith in the prevalence of just and beneficent ideas and the establishment of a wise national policy, resulting from the growing intelligence of the people, than he had in those political expedients to which they were then generally resorting. In 1884, with a popular administration, we are able to view without a moment's disquietude the preparations that are made by the masses to give expression to their democratic aspirations ; but in 1866 the case was different : it was as yet problematical whether a monster demonstration against the Government of the day could be organised, and conducted throughout, in an orderly and peaceable manner. Mr. Edmond Beales was vaguely known only as the president of a very extreme section of Radicals, and it required the light of subsequent events to reveal to the public, how thoroughly that modest and self-sacrificing man had impressed the spirit of moderation and reasonableness upon the spokesmen and political representatives of the proletariat class

of the metropolis. My father was not wholly without fear of riot and disturbance, but he was not in the counsels of the Reform League, and wrote upon the matter simply as an outsider. "Under the most careful management," he wrote, in reference to the projected procession to Hyde Park, "these demonstrations cannot be wholly disentangled from elements of danger; but," he added, "if any inconvenience results from the process by which the answer to the challenge thrown down is given, let the blame light on the heads of those who provoked it." These fears were, happily, not justified by the event. The will of the people, somewhat forcibly expressed when the point of collision was reached, was rightly understood, and Mr. Disraeli, in the session of 1867, enjoyed the distinction of passing a Household Suffrage Reform Bill into law.

In view of the enlargement of the constituencies which seemed imminent when the Conservatives took office, the Liberation Society determined to hold a series of conferences in North and South Wales, in order that the preponderant element in that country should be fairly represented in Parliament. At that time not a single Nonconformist represented a Welsh constituency, while nearly half its representatives were Conservative. The explanation of this apparent anomaly is to be found in the pernicious influence of the territorial magnates, who could work upon the fears of a limited constituency, unprotected by the ballot, to such an extent as to make free election

an impossibility. To no part of the kingdom would the Reform Bill bring such possibilities of revival as to Wales. The leaders of the Liberation Society well knew their ground: for many years their work had been quietly but efficaciously carried on in that country through the instrumentality of men whom the people loved and trusted, and who spoke to them in their own tongue. Mr. Miall, Rev. Henry Richard, and Mr. J. Carvell Williams, visited the principality in the autumn of 1866, and vigorously applied themselves to the work of rousing the latent fire and energy of the Welsh people, appealing to them especially to stand together in resisting the political influence of landlordism, and to organise themselves in town and county for electoral, parliamentary, and educational purposes. Mr. Goldwin Smith, also, who was spending his vacation in the neighbourhood, came forward publicly to avow his strong sympathy with the movement. "It was," he said, "because he was a faithful son of the English Church that he was a hearty and avowed enemy of the Establishment. Unless the Establishment died the English Church could not live." Mr. Miall was most emphatic in calling upon the Nonconformists to send his good friend and comrade, Mr. Henry Richard, to Parliament. It was at that time designed to nominate the latter at the general election as a candidate for Cardiganshire in the place of Sir Thomas Lloyd. "It is no use for you," said Mr. Miall, at a large meeting of delegates held at

Aberayron, "to think of having your dearest, your inmost principles represented in Parliament if you go to hunt after rich men, men of rank, or the large squires in your neighbourhood, or men who can give you some advantage of a temporal kind, such as ground for your chapels, and so on. That will not do if you mean to be represented properly, represented, not by your present representative who misrepresents you. Do not blink the matter. We must have it fairly out. He neither regards you, nor your principles, nor your objects. His purpose is not your purpose, his desire is not yours. He gave one vote to satisfy you, and gave the rest against you. . . . Take nobody as your representative but one in whose soundness of character you have implicit reliance—one who has sympathy with you in your objects, one who has earnestness of desire to promote those objects, one who is worthy of your suffrage. Here" (turning to Mr. Richard) "is your man."<sup>1</sup>

There was one hopeful sign in this matter of Welsh representation: the Welsh were not blind to their own shortcomings. At a large and enthusiastic meeting held at Denbigh, "the strongest measure of applause," says a Welsh paper (the *Oswestry Advertiser*), "was reserved for the answer

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henry Richard did not become a candidate for Cardiganshire, but was returned at the head of the poll in 1868 for Merthyr Tydvil. Cardiganshire, however, sent an excellent Liberal member in Mr. E. M. Richards.



of Mr. Henry Richard to a question put by one of the audience as to whose fault it was that the country was misrepresented. 'Your own fault,' said Mr. Richard, and the reply was greeted with one burst of applause which made the chapel ring again, as though the meeting felt some relief in vehemently blaming itself if it could do nothing more." The Reform Bill brought about a marked improvement in Welsh representation, to which reference may be made here, although somewhat in anticipation of the actual event. In 1868 Wales returned twenty-three Liberals against ten Conservatives, and among the former were three Nonconformists, one of whom has represented for fifteen years, not Welsh Nonconformists alone, but the best aspirations of the most cultured minds amongst English Liberals. "The landlords in Wales were very angry at their defeat," said Mr. Richard,<sup>1</sup> "and the language they used was the language of another assembly of defeated heroes recorded in Milton's *Paradise Lost*."

As to the character of the first Parliamentary assembly returned under the new Reform Act, and which it will be remembered was elected by the constituencies to support or resist Mr. Gladstone in his promised measures of justice to Ireland, it is worthy of record that no less than ninety-five members were opposed to the State Church, of

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Cardiff, February 24th, 1869.

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whom sixty-three were Protestant Nonconformists. The circumstances which led to my father's resumption of Parliamentary duties are sufficiently significant to warrant a somewhat lengthened digression, and are recorded in a separate chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BRADFORD.

1867—1869

1867: Vacancy at Bradford on the death of Mr. Wickham—State of Parties at this Period—Mr. Ripley the first Candidate—Mr. Miall adopted by the Liberal Association—Speech at Alexandra Theatre—Opposition Tactics—Mr. Miall Defeated—Entertained at a Banquet.—1868: The General Election—Retirement of Mr. Thompson—Requisition by 7,531 Electors to Mr. Miall—Mr. Ripley again a Candidate—Mr. Miall again Defeated—Election Petition—Bribery and Corruption—Mr. Ripley Unseated—Mr. Miall adopted by the Liberal Electors without attending—Triumphant Return—Letter to Mr. Law declining Money Testimonial—Presentation of Address and Library, &c., by the Women of Bradford—Mr. Miall's Reply—Public Breakfast at Cannon Street Hotel.

For many years prior to 1867 there were a few ardent friends of my father in Bradford who were anxiously but hopefully preparing the way for his candidature at the next Parliamentary election. The opportunity of introducing him to the electors of that borough occurred upon the death of Mr. Wickham in 1867.

Mr. Miall's connection with the representation of Bradford, if not the most interesting feature in his career, represents him in a very characteristic light,

as an indefatigable combatant and a persistent struggler against adverse influences. His failures led to no display of personal acrimony, and his ultimate success enabled him to vindicate his principles with a degree of authority at no previous time attained. It is with no wish to obtrude on public attention the petty squabbles of a series of election contests that I dwell on the history of a conflict in which my father was rather the exponent of a principle than a personal competitor for fame. Individual ambition, indeed, he never had, and the lack of the quality told as much for his happiness as for his usefulness.

In the triad of elections to the consideration of which this chapter is devoted, there was something more stirring than the customary elements of excitement. The old battle-cries would have sufficed to rouse and divide into bitterly hostile camps the population of every Yorkshire village, but in the years 1867 to 1869 religious animosities were super-added, and indeed became the passions most pointedly appealed to. Every student of English history is acquainted, almost to familiarity, with the cry of "The Church in danger," but at the time of which we speak it was no reference to a distant wolf which broke on the ears of the devotees of the Established Church. From the period of the accession of Mr. Gladstone to the ranks of Church reformers, even in one particular, the downfall alike of the Irish Church and of the Conservative Government

was doomed. While recognising and vindicating the justice and expediency of the former operation, it is but fair to admit that no more judicious political movement than an attack on the Anglican supremacy in Ireland could have been undertaken in the interest of the whole Liberal party. The Irish supporters of Protestant ascendancy were driven to their strongholds in Ulster, where there were great searchings of heart between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. In England the Nonconformists rallied almost to a man in support of Mr. Gladstone's measures, while the Whig section of the Liberals were pledged, too far to recede, to a breach of the connection of Church and State. The majority of my readers will require no reminder of the existence of those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and maintained, in defiance of fashion and respectability, a fight in support of apparently revolutionary principles.

The first candidate in the field after Mr. Wickham's decease was Mr. Ripley, at that time an irreproachable Liberal and a Dissenter, President of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce,—a man of good social position in the town. His address, issued as soon after the death of Mr. Wickham as decency would admit, fairly corresponded with the views of the then Opposition, but in those days men were critical, and the advanced Liberals were outspoken in their views. A movement was made among the electors to bring forward Mr. Illingworth, whose name has since become familiar to readers of the debates.

Mr. Illingworth, with striking generosity, declined to accept the nomination of the Committee of the Reform League, by whom his name had been preferred to those of my father and of Alderman J. V. Godwin, a local man of good standing and a subsequent candidate. A letter addressed to Mr. Arnold, the Secretary of the League, conveyed Mr. Illingworth's conviction that Mr. Miall would serve their cause better than the writer could. "Mr. Miall's presence in the House of Commons," the selected candidate went on to say, "is found now to be a national want;" and Mr. Illingworth pledged himself to work zealously with the League to promote his triumph. A preliminary meeting of the Liberal electors was soon afterwards held under the presidency of Mr. Alderman Law, when Mr. Robert Kell, in highly eulogistic terms, proposed my father as the Liberal candidate for Bradford. The motion, on being put, was carried with one dissentient. The humour and the pathos of elections have been detailed *ad nauseam*. I confine myself to such points in the contest as are in any wise illustrative of the man. At a public meeting of the Liberal electors held in the Alexandra Theatre, the names of Mr. Ripley, Mr. Godwin, Mr. Miall, and Mr. Matthew Thompson were submitted. Nearly every hand was held up for my father, the few opponents distributing their support (with no great advantage to one over the other) among the rival competitors, Mr. Thompson being probably second favourite. That gentleman was absent in

Dresden at the time, and his views were stated in a letter read to the meeting, in which the writer said :—"The question of who are to be candidates, as well as the question of who is to be elected, shall be, so far as I am concerned, for the electors to decide, and I won't lift a finger or say a word to influence them any way, unless called upon to do so. My wish is to be allowed to remain as I am, but if elected M.P. for Bradford I should accept the office, not as one of pleasure or personal gratification, or as satisfying my ambition, whether laudable or otherwise, but as a matter of duty which I was not at liberty to decline."

Alderman Godwin, to whom my father had been preferred by the advanced Liberals, gave him a disinterested and enthusiastic support. He took the chair at an aggregate meeting at St. George's Hall. The candidate does not seem at this meeting to have spoken at any great length. "You will send me to Parliament," he said, "not as a delegate, strictly bound down to written instructions; you will rather send me as a member of the first deliberative assembly in the world, in order that I may interpret to it, by my voice and my vote, your wishes with regard to legislation in general."

A speech delivered to a crowded audience at the Alexandra Theatre deserves an analysis. Mr. Isaac Holden, M.P., took the chair. Mr. Miall defined Parliament from the passing of the Reform Act down to the then present time as the representative of the

upper and middle classes. Treating of that condition as the past, he remarked—

“Let us part with it in good feeling. Even a middle-class Parliament,” he said, “has done some good deeds to grace its memory. It has not been wholly useless. It abolished slavery. It substituted popular municipalities for close corporations. It gave us free trade. It greatly shifted the burden of taxation. It has given to us a free press, an untaxed political press; and for all these things I think we should be thankful. On the subject of the franchise (he said) I have nothing to say, save this, that I think under all the circumstances of the case, if we are to thoroughly carry out the experiment which has been made upon the Constitution, we should have household suffrage, not hampered and restrained by the personal payment of rates, but pure and simple. So far I should say we may be content, for, after all, it is our business and our wisdom, when we have got what we regard as an efficient instrument, rather to sharpen our tools than to quarrel with them. . . . We must, as soon as possible, get rid of small nomination boroughs, and give a more adequate representation to our great, and populous, and teeming towns.”

The ballot came in for unqualified approbation :—

“What did they mean to do,” he asked, “with their new Legislature? and what objects did they propose to secure by means of it? He himself started from the general principle on which he had been accustomed to base all his moral and political conclusions—a principle of Divine authority: ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye likewise unto them.’ That was the



foundation on which the political edifice must rest—justice. Justice between man and man—justice between nation and nation. . . . All social and political wrongs would pass away if they would only treat them in the spirit of justice. And he thought that the working people, to whom political power would soon be transferred, might be trusted to do justice on most questions which came under their review.”

The condition of Ireland next underwent comment:—

“The sins of our ancestors,” he said, “are visited upon their children, and we are now at this moment suffering under the retribution which descends from generation to generation upon those who have done wrong or those who have refused to repair it.”

On purely English ecclesiastical subjects, Mr. Miall spoke characteristically as follows:—

“I have never sought through political agency to assert that my religion is better than yours. I do not arrogate to myself any superiority either in the power to judge or in feeling to love the truth that I hold. What I claim for myself in these respects I am most willing to give to others. The question is not whether your religion or my religion be the better one, but the question is, What is the fair position on which both religions should stand in regard to the Legislature? I am no sectarian. Of course I have my individual opinions; of course I belong to some religious association; but I have never sought to promote the interests of that association, nor have I in the slightest degree attempted to force my religious opinions upon others, otherwise than on the

field of pure and calm reason. If this Bradford contest was a contest between Church and Chapel, I would not be a candidate here. I beg to repudiate all sympathy with any such contest, and all that I wish to do in relation to ecclesiastical subjects is so to place every denomination of Christians or every association of non-Christians in the kingdom, in reference to the law, that they shall all stand upon an equal footing, and that their religion—the faith which they profess—shall stand or fall upon its merits. I am accused of attacking the Church with rancour and with venomous fanaticism. I can only say that I should be very sorry, supposing the case to be reversed—to be exchanged between me and the Churchman—I should be very sorry indeed that he should be accused of exhibiting rancour towards my religion by putting us both on a level. I hope my religion would be able to stand that. I certainly should not have very implicit faith in it if it would not; if it was to be buttressed up by law in order to sustain it, and could not bear comparison with other religions lest it should be injured, I think I should be tempted to turn my back on that religion. That is the sum and substance of what I wish to do with regard to the Established Church in these realms, and whatever our Church friends may think of it, I say that is the best favour that could be done to their Church. She goes about now like a rheumatic subject wrapped up in flannels and using crutches. I believe that if we were to knock these crutches from under her, to take these flannels from off her, and send her into the pure air, that she might exercise her limbs, she would find herself much stronger and much more successful."

Such were the views enunciated by the speaker; it would occupy too much space to reprod

illustrations graphically cited. University endowments and grammar school endowments were effectively referred to. In dealing with the subject of national education, Mr. Miall said—

“ I have for many years maintained that what we can do for ourselves we ought to do, rather than get Government to do for us. And if we were beginning *de novo*, I should say it would be well for the working classes of this country, if they could see that it is their interest, to keep education strictly in their own hands. I have not therefore been favourable to what is called Government education ; but Government is passing away now—passing away from one class chiefly into the hands of another class. As it is the work-people’s children that will be educated in the public elementary schools, so it will be generally, I should think, at the expense of the work-people, as well as of the middle classes, that these schools will be maintained, if they are maintained upon principles of justice. If there are local rates for education, and a central inspection to see that the rates are employed in giving an education that is worth anything, then, I think, the demands of this peculiar problem will be met. . . . With regard to the vagrant class, the children of the *proletaires* who leave their offspring in the street, to get what education they can in the gutter, I think we may mercifully take care of them, and see that the children do not suffer altogether from the sin of their parents, but at the same time I would take pretty good care, if you find the parents of these children, to exact from them the sums that are necessary in order that their children should be instructed.”

Of so-called compulsory education the speaker

said that he was not in its favour, by which proposition he explained himself as meaning that he was not at all in favour of making education subject of police arrangement and regulation. The relations of labour and capital were not shirked: the speaker advocated equality of penalty on breach of contract between employer and employed, and he saw no reason to grudge the working classes facilities for combination; he declared a preference for direct over indirect taxation, but he added a saving clause that the substitution could not be made yet. But that was the tendency in which things were going. As a reformer my father could not pass the expenditure of the national finances without comment, but apart from handling the subject from his own point of view, and pointing his illustrations with much of his individual raciness, it cannot be said that there was anything very distinctive about his utterances. There is something almost epigrammatic about the suggestion: "The fact is, it is not the minister that makes the estimates, but it is the department under him. The servants—if I may without offence use the analogy—are so numerous that, in fact, they govern the establishment." On foreign policy the speaker was a warm advocate for non-intervention. Referring to our John Bull habit of meddlesomeness he said: "All these foreign interferences have made us enemies. We have made our name detested abroad because we are always meddling with matters that do not belong to us. I hope that kind of policy

is passing away ; but, as Mr. Disraeli once said (and he never said a truer thing in his life), your national expenditure will always conform to what is your national and foreign policy." My father concluded as follows :—

" You have had a Reform Bill given to you by a Conservative Ministry. Yours, I think, will be the first great election which will take place since the Reform Bill was passed. Public opinion will be watching your conduct and waiting your decision to see what are the probable tendencies of opinion in this town. You ought to be able to foreshadow to the kingdom what will be the result of a reformed Parliament and a householder Parliament, when all its arrangements are completed ; and if you fail—if you fail in doing that which I know lies near to your heart—if you fail in doing it now—then I shall think that, whatever may be the course of this election, you will see good reason why a bad decision at this election should be reversed at the next."

The speech occupied in delivery an hour and a half.

The usual amount of heckling, without which no Yorkshire political meeting would be complete, followed, but the meeting was unanimous in its approval of Mr. Miall's candidature. Some ten thousand copies of the speech were printed and circulated in the town, and, in the words of the *Leeds Mercury*, "it won upon the thoughtful, and made those who wavered, at once declare themselves his (Mr. Miall's) staunch supporters."

I have dealt somewhat at length with this address, both for the sake of facility of narrative in disposing

of questions connected with electioneering, and for the sake of putting the reader *en rapport* with the speaker's style of reasoning and habit of marshalling his subjects.

It is a great question whether attraction or repulsion is the real magnetic influence in politics; whether votes are so much cast *for* a person or cause as *against* an adverse person and an opposite cause. The contest for the representation of Bradford lay between Mr. Thompson and my father, Mr. Ripley having withdrawn. As far as ostensible Liberalism went there was no great difference between the programme of the one candidate and that of the other, but Mr. Thompson was not Mr. Miall, and Mr. Miall could be none other than himself; hence all those who had not an actual preference for the personality of my father, attached themselves to the cause of his opponent. The correspondent of the *Nonconformist*, in the course of a graphic report communicated on the eve of the election, spoke of the existence of several shades of Liberalism in the town of Bradford. The extreme section went in for something like Chartism, and organised itself as "The Reform League." The Reformers unleagued, falling a little short of the views of the first section, belonged to "The Reform Union." Then came the more orthodox Liberals of the Democrat Whig type, and, Liberal as Bradford undoubtedly was, this section had up to the present contest the paramount share in the selection of candidates for the party. There were

at the time some 6,000 voters on the register, about a third of whom were more or less in sympathy with the Tory party. It will be manifest that the Conservatives, though not powerful enough to carry a candidate of their own, were ever strong upon the stronger side, and when stirred up to vigorous action could markedly affect, if not control, the representation of the town. It is nothing to the discredit of the local Tories that they were by no means Miallites, and the opponents of my father could count on their enthusiastic support. A great element of voting strength on the part of Mr. Thompson lay in the fact that he was the proprietor of a prosperous brewery in Bradford, and a wicked wag has given an alliterative vitality to the connection of "Beer and Bible." On the other hand, my father had the support of the teetotal element. One fact in Bradford politics must not be omitted, and that is the "Low Moor" vote. The ironworks of that name were and are situate within the borough (or at least the persons employed in them are resident within the borough), and the Low Moor influence, long a power in Bradford, was not by any means at my father's command. The walls of Bradford at the time, said the correspondent of the *Nonconformist*, "were never so plastered with placards. Thompson's committee issued unfair statements about their opponent, working the old dodge of printing detached extracts from the *Nonconformist Sketch Book* bringing

an extract from a scurrilous Rochdale print, twitting him with his poverty, calling him an obscure journalist with his own ends to serve, the rejected of many constituencies, and so on."

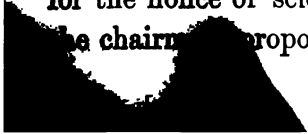
It was mainly in consequence of the reference in election placards and by the whole army of Church defenders to the *Nonconformist Sketch Book* that my father at this time determined to bring out a new and cheap edition of that publication. I have dealt with its history elsewhere, and need not again refer to the subject.

The polling for Bradford went on with much earnestness and no little excitement. The confederacy of parties was too much for my father's supporters to struggle successfully against, and in the result he was defeated by a majority of 403. Mr. Thompson polling 2,210 votes to 1,807 cast for Mr. Miall. The result no doubt was personally very gratifying to the successful candidate, who was still engaged in attendance on a sick son at Dresden ; but I am not aware that my father's equanimity was one whit disturbed by it. Something very like a riot marked the close of the polling. Two carts, loaded with coal, went along the streets ; missiles being readily available, there were plenty of hands prepared to use them. The *Bradford Observer* waxed Homeric in its account of the fray. A large stone was hurled at the windows of the Miall Committee Room, and a regular attack upon it followed. The police came out in great force, and like



respectable body with swords and staves, but order was not restored till a goodly number of casualties occurred. Happily no loss of life ensued. It is but an act of justice to some of the most prominent of Mr. Thompson's supporters to say that they incurred considerable risk in their efforts to appease or disperse the mob. Mr. G. R. Mossman, jun., waving a white handkerchief, went into the hottest of the fight, and by a judicious admixture of violence and exhortation did his utmost to promote peace. Mr. Kell, one of my father's ablest and most popular supporters, made a useful demonstration by walking amongst the excited people arm in arm with Mr. Semon, an active partisan of Mr. Thompson; and after a due amount of "alarums and excursions," a downpour of rain dispersed the tumultuous assembly. There was something well-timed in the modest reference to the future contained in the speech of my father already quoted.

The published expenditure of the candidates, not the most veracious of statistics, gave the following result—Thompson, 2,263*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*; Miall, 1,335*l.* 13*s.* 1*d.* The advanced Liberals in Bradford were by no means disheartened by the result of the election. In accordance with a good old custom, my father was entertained at a dinner in the Victoria Hotel, Bradford. Among the company was Professor Owen, who made an admirable speech as the advocate for the nonce of science and literature. Mr. Holden, the chairman, proposed the health of the guest of the



evening as that of "the champion of civil liberty and religious equality." The speech in reply seems to have given great satisfaction to the audience, but I find no record of it. On the evening of the same day, November 15th, 1867, an aggregate meeting of my father's political friends from all the wards was held in St. George's Hall. The attendance was large and enthusiastic. The address delivered on the occasion was a happy one, and as might have been expected was very well received. It is easy to imagine the tone of the speech; one or two extracts will suffice: "There are a large number of our fellow countrymen, and I believe a few of them are to be found even in Bradford who may well be baptised as 'political know-nothings.' They have no sort of preference for this view or the other. It is not so much that they see both, as that they see double. They have no personal attachment whatever to this principle or that, and all they are anxious to do is so to manage the political influence which has been intrusted to them by some profound mistake, as that nobody shall be offended, and especially as that no interest of their own may suffer." "I am spoken of," he said later on, "as an extreme man, but my principles are those which, carried out to their fullest extent, would kill sectarianism. I believe, and I have endeavoured to prove in my writings and in other speeches than this, that whilst there is an Established Church there must of necessity be embodied in it sectarianism, that intolerance is one of

the indispensable results coming out of such an institution. When men say to their fellow men 'Our religion is superior to yours, and we call in the aid of the law—that law which belongs to all citizens equally, to sustain our religion against yours,' they must of necessity, whatever may be their private feelings or actions, be guilty of intolerance. Only put this down and my work is done. I have nothing further to say in this direction because all that I have sought in my life would be achieved. Talk of the property of the Church! Gentlemen, I wish it was well sunk in the sea. . . . Of one thing I am clear in my mind, we have no right to expect grand results from a paltry, hollow, tricky legislation."

It is needless to say that all Bradford did not attend either the dinner or the meeting addressed by my father. Mr. Thompson had his banquet, and his supporters enjoyed themselves after their kind.

The year 1868 was a memorable one in English or rather British politics. Writing so soon after the event I need not dwell at any length on the discussions and meetings at which the fate of the Irish Church was the staple commodity for consideration. Bradford had its convictions on the subject, and on the 2nd of April a great meeting was convened at St. George's Hall to afford what aid it might to Mr. Gladstone in support of his resolutions pointing at Disestablishment. My father and Mr. Goldwin Smith were the principal speakers. Striking the

key-note by a reference to the Fenian movement and its lamentably destructive outbreaks, Mr. Miall remarked:—"We never supposed, we could not suppose, that any great number of our Irish fellow subjects approved of the outrages committed ostensibly in the cause of their nation, but we could not help seeing that these loathsome eruptions of folly and wickedness were the last outcome of a distemper of the blood, far more to be dreaded than the vices themselves. For Fenianism, though it may have had a foreign origin, never could have affected any class of the Irish people unless there had previously existed a strong susceptibility to its action." The speaker recognised to the full the kindly feeling of the purely English towards the Irish, and their wish to make such atonement as they might for the admitted wrongs of the past. At the same time, he pointed out, that the people of England and Scotland had at last made up their minds thoroughly with regard to the people of Ireland, that they shall have, and shall enjoy their rights, whatever those rights may be, and whatever the costs at which they must be conceded. I spare the reader any analysis of this speech because the fate of the Irish Church has passed into history, and because the address was severely polemical in tone, and much of the interest attaching to my father's criticisms on Mr. Disraeli has by this time evaporated. The speaker was master of his facts; the facts were notorious, and he did not miss a point in putting his case. An address

so thoroughly in harmony with the feelings of the audience was enthusiastically received.

In view of a general election my father's friends in Bradford were by no means idle. On the 11th of June, 1868 (a day, as an Anglican neighbour reminds me, sacred to S. Barnabas, the Son of Consolation), an outdoor meeting was held at Bradford Moor. The working classes mustered in great force, and a resolution was passed in complimentary terms pledging the meeting to support Mr. Miall's candidature for the representation of the borough. An amendment declaring the confidence of the constituency in Mr. Thompson met with very scanty support. The advanced Liberals in the borough were not only enthusiasts, but men of business. Long before the dissolution of Parliament an energetic canvass for their candidate was set on foot. In accordance with precedent a requisition was suggested calling on him to come forward. Nearly a thousand canvassers applied for signatures, and they worked with the energy to be expected of volunteers. Between Mr. Forster and my father there was at least no declared antagonism of views; the constituency was quite prepared to accept the combat as one between the former rivals. The requisition did no disgrace to the exertions of its promoters, it bore the signatures of 7,531 electors, and it was calculated that it involved the adhesion of some 2,000 more voters. Mr. Thompson retired from the contest, and his mantle fell on Mr. Ripley, whose name had before

been favourably received in the borough. On the 1st of August the presentation of the requisition to my father took place at a crowded meeting, over which his old and devoted friend, Mr. Kell, presided. The excitement of the occasion powerfully stirred my father, for the Yorkshire blood was up, and the enthusiasm of 2,000 people had something contagious in it. The tone of the speech in which he acknowledged the appeal to him was jubilant. I make but few extracts—

“I wish,” he said, “not simply to be identified with the working-man, but with all men. My sympathies do not stop with the order to which I belong. They descend below the class with which I am associated. I have always felt more interest in man as man, than in man under any especial and particular circumstances. I do not want to flatter anybody. I shall not flatter working-men, though I honour them, but I will work for them as heartily as I will work for any, and I feel that the mere fact of their getting their subsistence by the sweat of their brow is another recommendation of their cause to my sympathies. If you choose to send me to Parliament I shall go thither without any class restraints upon me whatever, and the one thing that I wish to do in framing the laws which are to touch the interests of the people, is justice to all men. . . . It is a delightful consideration to me that I am not to fight this battle alone, but that I am to be in conjunction with Mr. Forster, a representative of the whole Liberal party. And I desire here, before you all, to exonerate Mr. Forster beforehand from any participation in my extreme principles, nor will I

charge upon him things which in his honest opinion and judgment he has not assented to."

Turning to practical questions the speaker expressed himself strongly in favour of the severance of the personal payment of rates from the right to exercise the franchise.


"The relations between capital and labour lie next on hand to be settled. I don't fear the question; I have not the slightest interest on one side or on the other, but I have a deep interest in seeing that justice is done between employer and employed. I have told you before and I tell you again, that which the employer claims for himself from the law, I shall claim for you. I say that all he enjoys you are entitled to enjoy. If he can be associated with his equals and his compeers for the purpose of protecting his capital, so can you for the purpose of protecting your labour. I say that if his funds are protected by law, so your funds should be protected by law."

On finance matters he said :—

"I am what the newspapers call a paterfamilias. I am the father of a family, and I care whether the money that I pay into the hands of the tax-gatherer is economically and wisely spent or whether it is squandered amongst the mere dependents of Government."

On education, true to his earlier utterances, my father said :—

"My view has been twofold. First, not to let Government do for the working man what he could



better do for himself ; and secondly, not to hand over the working man's children to any religious denomination whatever."

Referring to the requisition just presented the speaker wound up by saying :—

"Well may a man be proud in receiving such testimony to his political exertions and his political life ; and as the sun is now shining upon us and we are not suffering as at the last election from a perpetual downpour of rain, so I augur that we are entering upon brighter days, that we shall have a happier termination to our contest, and that all will go as smoothly as a marriage bell.

A speech delivered at a meeting of the joint supporters of Messrs. Forster and Miall on the 3rd of August contains a few remarks worthy of citation. Referring to Mr. Forster, my father said, after paying a deserved tribute to the merits of his colleague :—

"I speak of Mr. Forster, not from personal acquaintance, for except at the funeral of the late Mr. Cobden I am not sure whether I have been in personal communication with him at any time, but I speak of him as a public man, my office having been to watch the conduct of public men. I know that he and I differ on the abstract principle of establishments. I know that he would take a far different course in regard to the English Church from that which I should be disposed to take. But that is a question for the future, and is not one of those practical questions in the solution of which the next Parliament will be engaged. . . . I look forward to Mr. Forster taking a very high position in regard to the government of the country. . . . I will rem



you that it would be more agreeable to my feelings that I should be able to conduct the contest to a close without awakening any personal animosities. Since I first came into this borough that has been my constant endeavour. I have, so far as I know, never cast one single reflection upon my late antagonist which now I look upon with dissatisfaction or with compunction. In fact I scarcely ever directed my attention to him, but rather to the exposition of the principles which I myself held."

At the close of the meeting one practical result was arrived at. A guarantee fund was started to meet the necessary election expenses, and so munificently was it supported that my father was put to no expense whatever.

It may be here stated that the constituency of Bradford, by the operation of the Reform Bill of 1868, was increased from 5,944 to upwards of 20,000, the large majority of the newly enfranchised voters belonging to the working class—that portion of the community which dwelt in houses and tenements of a rental of 10*l*.

Once entered on a campaign my father pursued it with vigour, for though personally somewhat of a shy man he derived a kind of inspiration from the platform. At one meeting he admitted that he had opposed the Ten Hours' Bill under a misapprehension that it would tend to injure the people, but he stated that he had then changed his opinions, and was in favour of further shortening the hours of labour when practicable.

My readers will, I trust, pardon me for making extracts from one other speech delivered before the election—delivered at St. George's Hall :—

“If the work which the Church has to do can be best performed by the Established Church of this country from all my heart I wish her ‘God speed.’ There is no sectarian envy on my mind. There is no paltry and petty jealousy that would in the slightest degree interpose between me and the indulgence of the sentiment to which I have just given expression. Nay more, I say this, that if the Church be well qualified—as I believe it ought to be well qualified in many respects—to do the work which is devolved upon it, high glorious spiritual work, and if it sees aright its opportunity and will only prepare itself for the changes which change of opinion has brought about, then I say this, that I myself would rejoice to unite with her in doing that work. And so far from putting an obstacle in her way, I would rather attempt to remove every obstacle out of her path, and in my confident expectation—where she rests upon a right sound basis and has the liberty of action which every Church ought to have in order thoroughly to accomplish her purpose—the probability is that she will absorb a large portion of the religious dissent now existing in this land, and constitute one of the most powerful engines for good that ever existed in any country.”

The nomination furnished an impressive sight. A dense crowd of over 30,000 spread out like a fan on a gently rising ground in front of the hustings; the show of hands was in my father's favour. One circumstance gave him great pain, and that was the threatened issue from London of some thousands of

appeals calling on the electors to plump for him to the manifest detriment of Mr. Forster. Whether the notion emanated from an indiscreet supporter or an unscrupulous opponent, Mr. Miall lost no time in indignantly repudiating the suggestion. The poll was held on the 18th of November and resulted as follows:—

Forster . . . . .	9,646
Ripley . . . . .	9,347
Miall . . . . .	8,768

It must be confessed that the result of the election was a sore disappointment to my father's friends, who in a very logical spirit proceeded to inquire into the relation of cause and effect, and they formed the opinion, which a vast amount of evidence went to support, that the influence of the old and ill-favoured allies, "Bribery and Corruption," was the principal factor in the problem. A petition was lodged against the return of Mr. Ripley, and after a very short trial before Mr. Baron Martin, the election, so far as Mr. Ripley was concerned, was declared null and void. The student of Blue Books will find the testimony which led to this conclusion writ large—it was not much to the credit of a large section of the constituency, but I have no inclination to reproduce or epitomise it. Like a thunderstorm it cleared the air, and gave an opportunity for freer respiration.

One would have thought that even Bradford had heard enough of the signal sound of strife at the

fact was far otherwise. One section of the Liberal party, and that, in its own estimation, the stronger one, considered itself defrauded of its rights, and the newly enfranchised voters, by whom my father was strongly supported, looked upon their new political weapons as all the better for handling. The opinion of the advanced party found expression in a resolution (passed at an open-air meeting attended by about 5,000 persons), as follows :—" That this meeting is convinced that had moral right and justice prevailed at the last election Mr. Miall would have been member for Bradford ; and being of opinion that Mr. Miall should again be brought forward, pledges itself to endeavour to secure his return." Mr. Thompson was this time brought forward as the representative of the defeated party, or combination of parties ; and if the combat cannot be described as going merrily, at all events it went vigorously enough. A proposition for the reference of the claims of the opposing candidates to the arbitrament of a test ballot fell to the ground. A singular, and to my father a very gratifying feature in the proceedings was, that the candidature on his behalf was not his : an address in his interest was signed by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Titus Salt as chairman, and by the several vice-chairmen of committees. One paragraph ran as follows :—

" Remembering the ungenerous treatment of Mr. Miall at the two former elections, it is thought best not to bring that gentleman into the conflict. Nor is it necessary, for the

people of Bradford will not forget that for more than thirty years he has laboured to extend the suffrage, reduce the public expenditure, and inculcate sound views on home and foreign politics. And on this particular occasion especially, politicians of all parties wish for his presence to aid in the coming debates on the question of the Irish Church."

There was much ill-feeling evoked by the presentation and the result of the petition, by which Mr. Ripley was unseated, and it was well for my father's peace, both of body and mind, that he did not personally occupy the position of Uriah the Hittite. The old friends of religious equality worked with more than their wonted zeal for their candidate, and their exertions met with triumphant success. At the poll, taken on the 12th of March, the numbers were—

Miall . . . . .	9,243
Thompson . . . . .	7,806
	<hr/>
	1,437

Mr. Thompson made a good-natured speech at the close of the poll. During the nomination there was a good imitation of a riot, but at the declaration of the outcome, thanks in a great measure to the exertions of Mr. Kell and other prominent advanced **Liberals**, the crowd dispersed in high good-humour.

On the news of my father's success reaching Mr. Forster, he telegraphed to the chairman of Mr. Miall's committee—"My most hearty congratulations and thanks to the 9,000 for the colleague they have sent me."

Irrespective of the personal pleasure derived by the successful candidate from his return, a single-handed contest ending in victory set at rest many points left doubtful at the last election, and gave my father the satisfaction of feeling that he was in accord with a majority of the voters.

At an open-air demonstration held at Woodlands Park, Manningham, the seat of Mr. Angus Holden, on the 22nd of May, 1869, a complimentary address spontaneously got up and signed by 1,500 working-men of Bradford, was presented to my father.

I close my reference to Bradford politics by chronicling a presentation which gave the recipient the liveliest pleasure. Immediately after the second election, *i.e.*, when my father was for the second time defeated, there was some talk of a money testimonial, but the matter came to his knowledge before it had taken definite shape, and he addressed the following letter to Mr. Law, the chairman of the Forster and Miall committee:—

“ To JAMES LAW, ESQ.

WELLAND HOUSE, FOREST HILL,  
November 27th, 1868.

“ MY DEAR MR. LAW,—A paragraph in yesterday's *Bradford Observer*, received last night, gratifying, as it could not fail to be, as an indication of kindness towards me, has nevertheless awakened serious concern in my mind. It is stated to be the intention of my friends at Bradford to raise a substantial money testimonial as an expression of the favour with which they regard my conduct in the late contest, and that you have consented to act as my treasurer. I hope I

shall not be deemed insensible to such spontaneous evidence of the goodwill of my supporters, but I find it impossible to accept any pledge of it in a pecuniary shape. I am not able to give my reasons *seriatim* in this note, *but they are final*. I cannot consent to dim in any way the lustre of the moral position which my friends have helped me to achieve.

"If, however, my Bradford friends have set their minds upon presenting me with some lasting memorial of their approbation of my course, I suggest that it should take the shape of a small library of historical and political works, well selected, uniformly bound, and constituting altogether a present worthy of them to bestow and of me to receive. Such a testimonial I could accept with pride and gratitude.

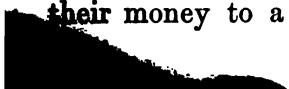
"Forgive me the liberty I have taken—an unbecoming one it may be—but I thought the suggestion might open the easiest way of escape from a difficulty I could never surmount—namely, the termination of one of the grandest passages of my life in a money investment.

"I am, my dear Mr. Law,

"Yours very faithfully,

"EDWARD MIALL."

The suggestion was acted upon, and the donors were the women of Bradford. In the course of delivery of, perhaps, a not over well-considered speech, Mr. Ripley had expressed a belief that he carried with him the sympathy of a majority of the women of the borough. It seemed that the majority in question thought otherwise, and with striking enthusiasm the women—wives and daughters, and factory hands particularly—interested themselves in the cause, subscribed their hands to an address and their money to a present.



I transcribe the former :—

“ Unusual as it may be for women to obtrude themselves in matters of public moment, we venture to hope that the peculiar circumstances of this occasion will amply justify our present course. It has been alleged during the recent political struggles that the sympathies of our sex were not with you. Never was charge more unfounded. Not only aiding our husbands, brothers, sons, but from our individual love of what is noble, true, and powerful, we have ardently espoused your cause. As women, we have been intensely moved by the nature of the opposition you have encountered though well aware that it could not permanently injure reputation so firmly established as your own. Permit us now to express our unbounded admiration of your past career, of your life-long devotion amidst many sacrifices to the advancement of civil liberty and religious equality, and of all which can dignify and bless humanity. Receive, dear sir, our heartfelt congratulations on the triumphant issue of our long protracted struggle. As a memorial of these sentiments, we beg to present to you, to Mrs. Miall, and to Miss Miall, some tokens of our affectionate remembrance. We accompany them by the prayer that God may bless you with long life and extended usefulness, and may permit you to realise to the largest extent the accomplishment of the noble objects for which you have so earnestly laboured.

“ We are, dear sir, on behalf of the subscribers,

“ Yours very truly,

“ JULIA MYERS, *President*.

“ ELIZA WHITAKER, *Treasurer*.

“ FANNY DOWSON.

“ ANN WYVILL.

“ MARY ADA CLARK.

“ ANNIE WHITEHEAD, *Secretary*.

“ SUSANNAH JACKSON.

“ BEULAH KEZIA HANSON.

“ BRADFORD, May 24th, 1869.”



Well in keeping with the eloquent address was the accompanying present, the product of some 600*l.*, contributed in sums from sixpence to five pounds, the names of the subscribers being inscribed in a handsomely bound volume. For my father there was a whole library of 375 well-selected volumes, the bindings costly and tasteful, together with polished walnut bookcases. For my mother there was a costly clock, and for my sister, Miss Emily Miall, a grand (and good) piano by Collard and Collard. I have endeavoured to single out the salient points of many an address by my father—most of them polemical; there was none in my judgment, though all were sincere and few lacking in ability, which more powerfully spoke the individuality of the speaker, or disclosed what was really a strong, if not the strongest, side of his character—tenderness. One or two passages of it only will I reproduce here:—

“Whatever you may have felt for me before, and however you may have approved of those political principles that I had advocated through this borough, from one end of it to another, the mere fact that I had been treated unfairly was quite sufficient to win your support, and in that hour I could not help but think of the lines of the poet Scott, who said—

“O woman! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow  
A ministering angel thou.”

It was worth while going through that defeat in order to arrive at this victory. The gateway was

dark; gloom and sadness pervaded the passage through which I had to walk; but when I emerged into the sunshine, as I have done this night, and have seen such enthusiastic and affectionate attachment to me as the representative of certain principles, I may say I bless God equally for what I have suffered as for what I now enjoy. I believe that you intend this meeting to be an expression likewise of your will to be associated with your husbands, with your sons, and with your brothers, in any good work which they undertake. It is not for men who do not care for our principles to draw a distinction between you and them in the homes in which you dwell. They were much mistaken if they supposed that nine thousand four hundred and thirty-two men could band themselves together in behalf of principles which they loved, and which they wished to advance to triumph, if they had not peace, sympathy, and concurrence in their homes. I could not have done the work which I have done for seven-and-twenty or eight-and-twenty years past, if I had been deprived of home sympathy—that sympathy which dwells within the domestic circle. And from many a trial to which I have been exposed, and many a disappointment which has almost overwhelmed my soul, it has been my happiness through life that I could retreat to that sacred spot, and always find the comfort and consolation that I required. For anybody to suppose that this great work which has been done in the borough would be done contrary to the wishes, and in opposition to the determination, of the women of Bradford argues that he must have been strangely unconscious of those powers—those secret motive powers—by which the world has always moved onwards towards feats of heroism. If ever we do that which we ought to do in a right spirit, if ever we illustrate our own names by deeds that have

blessed others, depend upon it we have been moved somewhere—we have been operated upon in some part of our mind or our emotions by the dictates and the smiles of womankind.”

The interest with which the issue of these elections was watched was not confined to the borough of Bradford. Mr. Robert Kell received an enormous mass of correspondence from persons in various parts of the country asking for early information in reference thereto, and numerous requisitions for telegraphic despatches from hour to hour on the polling day. He received one letter from a shopkeeper in Cornwall, which said, “Please send me every two hours a copy of the return of the poll if Mr. Miall is winning; if he is losing you need not telegraph. We shall get the news fast enough.”

“There is nothing that succeeds like success.” The tide of congratulation flowed on until my father avowed that he almost wished he could forget his name. At a public breakfast given in his honour at the Cannon Street Hotel, he said :—

“It is better to do the hardest work or to face the greatest danger, than it is to receive the honours which come after triumph. . . . I thank this assembly, every member of it individually, for the gratification, almost too deep not to be painful, that I have felt this morning, and I thank you especially that you come to honour me, not so much as an individual, but as an individual representing a principle dear to your souls. I shall be most happy when that principle arrives at its full triumph in the

legislation of this kingdom ; but I must say that, as far as personal, mere personal enjoyment is concerned the work that one has to do in connection with the principle gives higher satisfaction to the mind than even the triumph itself. Thank God, He has associated in this world the very highest enjoyment of which human beings can be capable with the performance of duty—not with the consequences that come out of the duty, however happy these consequences may be ; but I will say this—and I hope I shall not be expected to say much respecting myself—I will just say this much, that I have been a happy man, and that amidst all the obloquy—sufficient to overwhelm any one who happened to care for it which I did not—which was provoked by putting forward a principle of which society in England did not approve, I have enjoyed, perhaps, as much calm tranquillity, as much rest of soul, as much true gratification of my feelings as any man living. My reward has been in my work. I never looked forward to the ultimate triumph of my principles during my lifetime. I have, it is true, many times speculated as to what would be my feelings if I were to live to see a day like this ; and I must say that but for the good which I believe is to come out of the triumph of our principle in its application to Ireland, but for the good which will come to Ireland, but for the good which will come through Ireland to the United Kingdom, and but for the good that will be diffused from that centre over the family of mankind, I could have wished to have gone on labouring, waiting, fighting, as far more congenial to my feelings than receiving honours. . . . I would that I could forget my name—not that I am ashamed of it, but that it has been so frequently before the public of late that I would rather that it were, for a time at least, buried in oblivion. I long to get back to quiet work,

and I hope that after this meeting I may be permitted to get back to quiet work—the work of advancing, by the exercise of all the powers that I may have, that truth which, as my friend Mr. Richard has told you this morning, years and years ago so far commanded my homage and my affection that I spontaneously dedicated my life to its service.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### IN PARLIAMENT.

1869—1871.

1869: Mr. Miall's Welcome to Parliament—Speech on Irish Church Debate—Silent Support of the Government Measures—Reaction foretold—The Education Act 1870—Objections to Denominational Teaching—Speech on Third Reading—Mr. John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review* on the "Struggle for National Education"—1870: Mr. Miall determines upon an Aggressive Movement—Preparations for the Motion on Disestablishment of the Church of England—Support in the Country and at Bradford—Letters to Mrs. Miall.

THE junior member for Bradford met with a hearty welcome from more than one quarter of the House on his re-entrance upon Parliamentary duties. As he came forward to take the oath, a loud cheer broke from the Liberal benches, which was repeated again and again, and responded to from the Conservative side until the clerk's table was reached. Not less hearty and emphatic was the feeling expressed through the organs of public opinion in London and the country. During the debates on the Irish Church Bill in 1868, his name had been

introduced *ad nauseam* by Conservative peers and commoners, who wished to fasten upon Mr. Gladstone all the odium that attached to the designs of Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society. The contest was renewed at the earliest practicable period in the session of 1869—a contest now between Lords and Commons—and the appearance of so well-abused a man at the moment when the interest of the struggle was at its culminating point, was an incident which brought my father into a position of prominence not altogether to his liking. He made a speech of some length, in the course of the debate, a few days after he had taken his seat, and was well listened to, but he was at that time suffering much from nervous prostration, and there can be no doubt that public expectation was disappointed. He was only too well content, during the remainder of that session, to keep his own counsel, and to take his place in that phalanx of silent but watchful supporters of the Government whose confidence in, and loyalty to Mr. Gladstone, constituted, after all, the strongest weapon which the Government could command in their assault upon the strongholds of prejudice, injustice, and ignorance.

The legislation of 1868–1870 comprised most of those measures which made Mr. Gladstone's first Administration famous in the annals of reform. The Abolition of Church Rates, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, Reform of the Endowed Schools, Repeal of University Tests, Irish Land Reform, and

the establishment of a system of National Elementary Education, were among the principal legislative triumphs of the session.

The first "Householders' " Parliament was eager for work, and it could not well have had a leader more willing or better qualified than Mr. Gladstone to initiate and develop the schemes of reform to which it was pledged. But its zeal soon flagged: instead of warming to its work it grew impatient of continued reference to abstract principles, and exhibited, in the third and succeeding years of its existence, all those signs of indifference, which inevitably follow upon activity, stimulated more by the force of example than by the constraint of genuine conviction. Mr. Miall, with characteristic foresight, had contemplated such a declension from the very first session. Writing in the *Nonconformist* of December 2nd, 1868, he said: "We do not feel ourselves warranted in deducing from the fact that because an overwhelming majority of Parliament is pledged to do justice to Ireland by giving her religious equality, it will be any more disposed on that account to apply the same principle in Great Britain. It is not at all improbable indeed, that, for a while, the opposite disposition may be manifested." . . . "That the House of Commons will do what it is pledged to do we have not the least doubt. That it may angrily refuse to do more we think very probable."

The session of 1869, during which the Irish Church Disestablishment Act was passed in both



confidence. Speaking upon the question of national education at a mechanics' institute meeting in a Bradford suburb, a few weeks prior to the introduction of Mr. Forster's measure into the House of Commons, he gave a clear, practicable outline of what he considered a suitable educational scheme for adoption in this country. There was not a word of apprehension as to the probable tendency of his colleague's proposals. But the introduction of Mr. Forster's Bill—prefaced though it was by a speech in which, said Mr. Miall, the mover achieved a triumph such as had seldom been witnessed in the House of Commons—speedily dispelled all pleasant illusions. My father's view of what the State should be called upon to supply is roughly indicated in the speech at Bradford already mentioned.

“I think that if the State is to supply a general system of national education, that system must of necessity be mainly a secular system. And when we speak of secular education we mean this—it is not secular in the sense of excluding and denying religion as important; it is only secular in the sense of teaching those subjects which are of a secular character in themselves. No one can say that reading, or writing, or arithmetic, or geography, or grammar, is a religious subject. But it is not only because of their secular objects that these secular schools are called secular; sometimes advantage is taken of the indefiniteness of the term secular, to call these schools godless. Now they are no more godless schools than a railway directorate is a godless directorate, simply because its members do not introduce all their business and all their consultations with each other by some religious exercise. The fact is, we have by our

unwise treatment of this whole question of education, allowed people to confound in their mind religion with other topics, just as though religion were a work to be done instead of a state of mind and heart to be gained. Religion is the motive which should lie at the basis of everything else, and it cannot be commended by any instruction which we may give, though of course without instruction it never can exist. But religious influence with children ought to come from their parents, and if there are no parental influences of a religious character to be expected in the homes of many of our poor people, what are the churches for? Certainly not to quarrel as to the kind of teaching that shall be given at our day schools; but they ought to bring forward all their energies to supply the lack of that which they think characterises the instruction given in day schools, and to give that religious instruction gratuitously—and more than gratuitously—with the earnestness, and with the knowledge, and with the love which is calculated, if anything is calculated, to make it successful.”

It was a keen disappointment to him to find, on examination of Mr. Forster's plan, that the Church of England was placed in a favoured position; that the question of Church ascendancy was, in fact, revived in its most vexatious form. Both in the House of Commons, and more explicitly in his articles upon this subject in the *Nonconformist*, was this pointed out, and it marked a clear divergence between the Nonconformists on the one hand, and the Conservatives and less ardent Liberals on the other. The Nonconformist view was fully set forth in Parliament by Mr. Dixon, the late Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Richard, Mr. Candlish, Mr. Illingworth, and many others, as well as by my

father; and so strong was the representation made by the whole body of unsectarian educationists both in the House and out of it, that the Prime Minister gave an undertaking on the second reading of the Bill that the objection should be considered and met before the Bill reached the committee stage. But both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster had to give equally strong assurances to those who objected to a purely secular education, and who ostensibly on that ground clamoured for denominational religious teaching. The result, it is well known, was a compromise, and a compromise favouring the strongest party. Not more than from sixty to eighty votes were recorded for the various amendments proposed by the anti-denominational members. The position held by my father in relation to the Government Education scheme, and by others with whom he acted in concert, both in and out of the House, was one which under any circumstances it would have been difficult to state so fully and clearly as to secure the approval of the general public. It was rendered a much more difficult task by the nature of the appeal made against it by the Prime Minister and Mr. Forster. They were not satisfied with having drawn up the clauses of the Bill so as to strengthen the Church of England schools then existing, or that might be called into existence within the next six months, but they branded the opposition to denominational teaching as narrow and unreasonable, and claimed for their own policy that it was adopted.

interest, and out of consideration for the just claims of the various bodies which had hitherto been interested in the education of the people.

It was under the smart of this treatment, from a Government to whom he had given the most ungrudging support, that my father, on the motion for the third reading, gave vent to his feelings in terms which drew upon him a most unsparing rebuke from Mr. Gladstone. The latter in his anger and vexation forgot to be generous. Mr. Miall's complaint was that the Government had wounded and betrayed their best friends. It is perhaps better that the terms in which the charge was made, and the reply of the Prime Minister, should be alike forgotten. My father's loyalty to the Government was unchanged. "Mr. Gladstone," he wrote, in the same number of the *Nonconformist* that recorded the speeches on the debate, "will not lose the grateful respect of those who did so much to place him in power; nor will the Nonconformist members who have reminded him that they represent claims as well as concessions, forfeit the respect which the leader of the House of Commons always in the long run pays to honesty and outspokenness of utterance, when they are not used as a shield to cover malignity of temper or treachery of purpose. It was a 'lover's quarrel,' and no more need be said about it."

The working of the Education Act proved more conclusively each year that the clauses—the notorious twenty-fifth clause in particular—which enacted

the levying of rates for schools in which denominational religious teaching was provided, were everywhere a source of bitterness and strife, and amply justified the determined and persistent opposition of the Birmingham Education League and the Liberal members of the House of Commons below the gangway. I cannot forbear making a quotation on this subject from an article written for the *Fortnightly Review* by the present junior member for Newcastle, Mr. John Morley, in 1873 :—

“The complaints against the twenty-fifth clause are set down to the resentment of a religious faction. The cry for universal school boards is explained by the spleen of Dissent. The denunciation of Mr. Forster as a renegade from the principles of those Puritan ancestors of whom he made such untimely boast, is traced to the mortifications of Nonconformist vanity and arrogance. The whole controversy is narrowed to the ancient story of rival churches and wrangling sects. Even Mr. Fawcett, in his new and slightly diverted character of ‘Moderate Churchman,’ is refreshed by a Conservative cheer for accusing of sectarian aims the very men who advocate national education and the absolute exclusion of denominational interests. Energetic Dissenters and Churchmen know very well what they are about. No great body of Englishmen will take trouble, and spend money, and face the wear and tear of forming an army and conducting a long campaign just to gratify a resentment or air a grievance. Those who assert that all this is done at the bidding of a clique, must, in the face of all history, believe the Dissenter to be a man of much docility and very little common sense. They can, moreover, have paid no attention to the actual evidence of the universality of

As a body, the Nonconformists are staunch and active in their hostility to the measure, which a sounder and older Liberal than Mr. Gladstone (Mr. John Bright) has described as the worst measure passed by any Liberal Government since 1832."

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"Dissent, it is true, offers little that touches the fastidious and sentimental love, which is so much in fashion in our times, for the picturesque, the gorgeous, the romantic, the sweetly reasonable. Its creeds may be narrow, its spirit contentious, its discipline unscriptural, its ritual bleak, its votaries plebeian. As politicians we need not greatly exercise ourselves in these high matters. Intellectual coxcombry and social affectation are welcome to expatiate upon them at any length. The Dissenters have not been favourably placed for the acquisition of the more delicate graces. To stand in the pillory, to have your ears slit, to lie in bishops' prisons, to be driven forth by the hundred from home and sustenance, to be hunted with Five Mile Acts, Conventicle Acts, Test Acts, Schism Acts,—the memory of these things may well leave a tincture of sourness in the descendants of those who suffered them, and a tincture of impatience with those bland teachers who invite them to contrast their pinched theology and sullen liturgies with 'the modest splendour, the unassuming state, the mild majesty' of the Church that afflicted and persecuted them. Dissent is not picturesque, but it possesses a heroic political record. It has little in the way of splendour or state, but it has a consistent legend of civil enlightenment. It may lack mild majesty, but it has always shown honest instincts.

"If this, then, be a true reading of the past, as it is assuredly the reading of our most competent students of the past, there is a fair reason why we should expect to find the Dissenters on the right side in the issues of the present. If in the war between the Churchman and Nonconformist was reality, a war on the forces of political

progress and the forces of political reaction, we may perhaps find on looking a little more closely that it is the conflict which rages now."<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that if my father had seen Mr. Gladstone's declarations in regard to national elementary education and university teaching indications of a disposition to follow out the principles of religious equality to their full and legitimate issue, he would have continued to devote his attention to the work of instructing and stimulating the members of the constituencies, but the course of legislation in the Session of 1870 had undeceived him. It is clear that Mr. Gladstone, as interpreter of the people's will, was not prepared to weaken the status of the Established Church. My father considered, therefore, that the time was come when the whole question of Church and State, as exemplified in the Established Church of this country, should be introduced into the House of Commons, believing that by so doing means it would be most effectually brought before the whole nation.

There is nothing in the shape of positive declaration in Mr. Gladstone's speeches up to the moment of writing these pages, which would warrant conclusion that he is prepared to advocate severance of Church and State in this country. In spite of the unmeasured hostility with which he was regarded by the Conservatives of to-day and of

<sup>1</sup> "The Struggle for National Education," a paper by John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review* for August and September, 1873.

unwavering confidence extended to him by the Non-conformists in common with the general body of Liberals, it is but too probable that the coming generation will regard him as one of the most determined and successful defenders of the English Church Establishment of all modern statesmen. In this respect my father had, as already pointed out, for some years past entertained quite another view of the Premier's tendencies. It was with the full and hearty concurrence of the leaders of the Liberation Society that he determined to introduce forthwith into the House of Commons the question of disestablishment, and if need be to revive it session after session until a dissolution should remove it from the parliamentary arena to the constituencies. Accordingly he gave notice, at the close of the session of 1870, of his intention to obtain a committee of the whole House for the purpose of laying before it resolutions preliminary to the extension to the Church of England of the policy of disestablishment and disendowment carried into effect by the Irish Church Act of 1869. This declaration was hailed with enthusiasm by the more active and eager section of the Liberal party. In the autumn of the same year and in the early part of 1871 large and influential meetings were held in Bradford, Manchester, Leicester, and the metropolis, besides numerous smaller gatherings in other parts of the country, in support of the intended motion, with the result of awakening an interest in the subject in



the minds of thousands who had until now regarded it with indifference. The warmth and earnestness displayed at these conferences were in part produced by the bracing air of opposition encountered by the supporters of disestablishment. There was far less of that embittered and unscrupulous hostility that was displayed during the Irish Church agitation, but both in the public press and on the platform the various sections of the State Church party were agitated with disquietude and vague alarm.

My father viewed the prospect of introducing his motion into the House of Commons with not a little perturbation of mind, and while on the one hand the constantly increasing evidences of public support which reached him reassured him as to the deep interest felt by the whole body of Nonconformists in the subject, they tended only to deepen his sense of responsibility. The opportunity now occurring was one for which he had watched and patiently waited for years. He looked upon it as one which, if fitly used, would leave him but little more to do in the direction of the public exposition of his principles. His extreme anxiety was to gain the ear of liberal-minded Churchmen, and of honest politicians who were outside the circle and influence of Dissenting ideas,—to assure them beforehand that he should place the question before the country not on the ground of sectarianism, but as one of justice and nationality. Nothing was easier for him than to make a speech, or write a paper, upon a subject with

every aspect of which he was more than familiar, and yet it was a task of seven or eight months, during which other work was greatly interrupted, and even the customary pipe was laid aside, to bring his physical and mental frame into such harmony with his purpose that he could rely upon this being in every way a worthy effort.

A couple of letters written to Mrs. Miall from Yorkshire in the autumn of 1870 show him to be combining much needed recreation with a visit to his constituents, who were backing him in his enterprise with heart and soul.

“HEATON MOUNT, *November 16th*, 1870.

“I have got through my work satisfactorily. Our conference was not very numerously attended, for the weather in the afternoon was awful—sheets of rain mingled with snow, but, on the whole, was interesting. At night the sky cleared, and the St. George’s Hall meeting was magnificent, as magnificent and enthusiastic as I ever saw one in that place. Henry Richard and his wife were there, and he, I fancy, was greatly impressed. He had a very warm reception, which was as gratifying to me as it could have been to himself. My voice threatened at first to break down, but it improved as I proceeded, and I got through without any disagreeable incident. As to the audience, it was in a glorious tone, eager in listening, prompt in catching passing points, hearty in responding. The speaking was good all through, and the meeting was regarded universally as a success, leaving nothing to be wished for. I proceed to Manchester tomorrow, where there is to be another conference, and no public meeting.

“P.S.—Rheumatism is a little better. General health and spirits pretty fair.”

"CAVENDISH ARMS, BOLTON BRIDGE, WHARFEDALE, YORKSHIRE,  
*November 21st, 1870.*

"Here we are, as jolly as wind and rain will admit of, in a country hotel, away from all society but our own, every prospect green and dripping, every breath smelling of country, and inside snug, cosy, and clean. We arrived on Saturday evening, after lunching at the Crescent Hotel, —Mr. and Mrs. H. R., Mr. A. T., and myself,—and were soon over-throat in all the mysteries of a Yorkshire meat *tea*. The consequence was that I had a tolerably wakeful night, but with a good fire in my bedroom that was no very serious calamity. We shall probably stay in this house, where we are quite alone, until Wednesday. We went yesterday morning to service in the church of Bolton Abbey. It was a choral service throughout, but a very evangelical sermon. I enjoyed it for once, but should not like every week to have an appeal made to sentiment in religion without any address whatever to the spiritual side of my nature. There was no ritualism, but the evangelicism was of the most rudimentary character. It was a beautiful sunshiny day, so we took a walk in Bolton woods after church, and saw the exquisite sylvan beauties of the place. To-day we are all engaged in writing, all sitting round the same table, and driving our respective pens with great industry. The quiet and purity of the locality are delicious, and I think my health improves and my rheumatism sits on my shoulder more loosely. My companions all desire their love to you. Emily and I join with them, associating B. with the home circle. A. wishes me to tell you I have *not* improved during the interval of his separation from me. It is possible I may not come home until Saturday. Hallé gives his first concert at Bradford on Friday, and I have some idea of staying to hear it. *Au revoir.*"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DISESTABLISHMENT DEBATES.

1871—1873.

1871 : Mr. Miall's Motion for Disestablishment of the Church of England—Mr. Richard's Recollections of the Debate—Comments of the Press—1872 : Motion for a Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Revenues of the Church of England—1873 : Debate on Disestablishment "burked"—Mr. Miall's Public References to the Debate of 1871—Extracts from Speeches in Support of his Motions in 1871, 1872, and 1873.


THE debate raised upon Mr. Miall's motion in 1871 was in every way worthy of the importance of its subject. It was opened at five o'clock on Tuesday, May 9th, in a good House, the occupants of the Treasury bench being Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Bruce—the front Opposition bench being crowded. My father was perhaps never more felicitous in his mode of addressing the House, nor more attentively and respectfully listened to. He was ably supported by several Radical members, notably by his good and trusty friend Mr. Henry Richard, and by Mr. Leatham. The motion was opposed by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, Sir Roundell Palmer and Mr. Bruce, each of whom congratulated the

mover on the tone and spirit in which the question was introduced, and a division was taken at one o'clock in the morning, giving 89 votes in favour of the motion, and 374 against it. The last and most impressive word was spoken by Mr. Gladstone, who "ventured to say to his hon. friend what he was sure he would not resent, that if he sought to convert the majority of the House of Commons to his opinions, he must begin by undertaking the preliminary work of converting to those opinions the majority of the people of England."

Mr. Richard, who sat by my father's side that evening, writes to me:—"It was to many of us a memorable scene. There was a new House of Commons since he sat in 1852, with a very unusual proportion of new members. When he first gave notice of his motion there rang through the Conservative benches a half-angry and half-contemptuous murmur. But when the time came for bringing it forward there was a crowded House; his position was in many respects a very difficult one, for a large proportion of his audience was in anything but a propitious mood. He had to contend with every kind of prejudice. He was not only a Nonconformist, but he was the typical and representative Nonconformist. He was the editor of a Nonconformist paper, and worse than all he had been at one time a Nonconformist minister, all which points were very repugnant to the ordinary secular politician. He was about to assail an institution which was regarded


by many with very sincere, if somewhat superstitious, veneration. But I believe the House was greatly taken by surprise by the speech which Mr. Miall delivered; they had to listen to a strain of refined, almost subtle thought, temperate in spirit, calm and measured in tone and language, and very far removed from what many of them probably anticipated. Mr. Disraeli was the first to pay a very honourable tribute to Mr. Miall. 'The hon. gentleman,' he said, 'who introduced this question, introduced it with an intellectual power and a maturity of thought worthy of the occasion. I listened to his speech with interest. I felt it was an address which maintained the character of the House of Commons.' And Mr. Gladstone further spoke of him as having treated the subject 'in a tone which has drawn the most just eulogies from every quarter of the House.'"

If the comments of the press fairly indicated the feeling of the British public upon the issue placed before the House it was abundantly clear that the subject was no longer regarded as outside the region of legislative action. The *Times* thought it hardly to be doubted that this century would see the consummation Mr. Miall so devoutly wished. "Very few," said the *Daily News*, "who heard Mr. Miall, and saw the reception his speech met with on the Liberal benches below the gangway, could have much doubt of the eventual adoption of the policy he recommends." Almost all the Liberal daily



papers in the large towns pronounced unequivocally in favour of disestablishment. Mr. Tillet's paper, the *Norfolk News*, pointed out that Mr. Miall polled almost the exact number which former initiators of great measures in Parliament have numbered. "It is now," writes the editor, "one of the great questions; next year, or the year after, it will perhaps be the great question, and not many years afterwards it will be the inexorable, irresistible demand of the nation."

The second and the third attempts to obtain a discussion upon some other aspects of the State Church question in the sessions of 1872 and 1873 were not equally successful. The form of the motion in 1872 was, "That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying her Majesty that by means of a Royal Commission full and accurate particulars may be obtained of the origin, nature, amount, and application of any property and revenues appropriated to the use of the Church of England." Mr Miall's speech was supported by excellent speeches from Mr. Leatham and Mr. Illingworth, and was opposed by Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Cubitt, and by Mr. Gladstone. The debate was deficient in interest, but the support accorded to the motion was somewhat larger than in 1871, while the opposition vote was much smaller. The numbers were—Ayes, 96; Noes, 295. The following year something like a conspiracy brought about a premature closing of the debate, which took the disestablishment advocates by surprise.



Mr. Vernon Harcourt, following Mr. Gladstone in his reply at a very early period of the debate, took his cue from the prevailing disinclination of the members present to prolong the discussion, and was induced by the first cries of impatience to resume his seat before he had fairly developed his argument, thus precipitating a division when it was least expected. The motion, the terms of which were that the establishment by law of the Churches of England and Scotland involved a violation of religious equality, and deprived them of the right of self-government, obtained only 61 votes, the tactics adopted by Mr. Miall's opponents having cheated him of 38 supporters.

I have spoken of three debates on this question of Disestablishment and Disendowment in the Parliamentary sessions of 1871, 1872, and 1873. The only one probably which will be allowed to have a historical value is that of 1871. Mr. Miall, who was overwhelmed with letters and resolutions of congratulation upon the courage and ability with which he had discharged his task, explained on more than one public occasion the secret of his success. "When you speak of the courage," he said, "with which the motion I brought forward in the House of Commons was presented to that House, I must disclaim that it is natural to me. I believe that it was an inspiration—an inspiration that was breathed into me by the general fervid, prayerful spirit of my own friends everywhere, and that, sustained as I knew I was everywhere by their earnest desire, and by



the uplifting of their hearts to Heaven that I might be successful, I felt that there was solid ground on which I could stand—and if I might express my feelings, I would do it very much in the same way as my old and venerable friend George Hadfield, member for Sheffield, who said to me in the House of Commons a few minutes before I rose, ‘Miall, God, and you need not fear any man.’”<sup>1</sup> After speaking at a conference at Manchester, six months later, he said that, in relation to this question, his conscience was weighed down with something like the feeling which the apostle experienced when he said, ‘Yea; woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.’” “I have been sustained,” he added, “by the sympathy and by the prayers of the Nonconformists throughout the country, and it was in faith that those prayers would be answered that I rejoiced in the experience which I have never before had in my life, that on the morning of the day on which I was to bring forward the motion, the clouds all lifted off my mind. I can take no credit to myself; I can only say that I have attempted to perform a duty from which I shrank, and I was assisted in the performance of it.”

Following the plan previously adopted in this memoir, I have selected passages from each of the three speeches in which my father introduced this subject before the House of Commons, and arranged them topically rather than chronologically.

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Great Horton, Bradford, June 2nd, 1871.

HOSTILITY TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DISCLAIMED.—“The motion I am about to submit to the House does not rest upon any sectarian or narrow grounds. It involves a matter of high national policy. It concerns the interests of Churchmen quite as much as it does those of Dissenters—and in its range it embraces issues which will affect the condition of numbers of persons who sympathise with neither. I desire to deal with it, on the present occasion, in the full recognition of those facts, and therefore with no special reference to the benefit of Nonconformity, but simply with a view to the social, moral, and religious advantage of the whole country. As a rule, I am quite aware this House dislikes abstract resolutions. But it is to no idle discussion that I invite the House. The object I have in view is a perfectly practical one, namely, to ascertain how far the House is disposed to apply to other parts of the United Kingdom a policy sanctioned by Parliament in its application to Ireland. In seeking to gain that object I earnestly and honestly disclaim all feeling of hostility to particular Churches, as well as to particular Church parties. I wage no war with religious denominations, as such—Episcopalian or Presbyterian. I heartily wish them God-speed in their respective spiritual missions. In this House, I trust, and in my capacity of member, no one will ever hear from my lips any criticism of the religious faith, or of the mode of worship, of the Church to which he belongs. I shall not assail either the Church

of England or the Church of Scotland as a spiritual organisation, but I shall attempt to show that the relationship they sustain towards the State, and the position which the State assigns to them, are condemned by experience, as well as by reason, and ought to be put an end to as soon as possible."—1871.

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"Not a word will pass my lips disrespectful to that Church, as a Church; not a word disparaging any of the parties or schools of thought, as I believe they are now called, which remain within her pale. In certain points of doctrine, as well as discipline, and by shades of belief more or less marked, it is true, I dissent from her standards. But the area of belief, worship, and practice, over which I sympathise with her members, is much broader than that over which our differences extend. It is for the sake of her own future, for the sake of religion in the land, I will call upon the House to help her out of a position which neutralises her proper authority and cripples her powers of usefulness. Am I alone Sir, in cherishing this desire on her behalf? Are there not large numbers of her own devoted members—High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church—who deem it impossible for her to do as she would if she were free? Why, what is the meaning of the cry for Church Reform, as against Disestablishment—in which

Episcopal voices may be heard mingling with those of the clergy and laity—but a confession that the law of the land prevents her from doing the things that she would ? ”—1873.

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LEGISLATION ON THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE DELIBERATE.—“ It would be nothing short of a national calamity if the changes—the legal changes—which the Disestablishment of the Church of England would require should be set about under the impulse of political terror or popular passion, or indeed under any external conditions except such as would allow of ample leisure, cool deliberation, and quiet interchange of opinions. So much as to the charge of being premature, from a general point of view.”—1871.

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“ I desire that whatever is done in Parliament in this matter should be done as the outcome of calm, dispassionate judgment, and in full view of all those elements of the case which ought to receive their due proportion of consideration. I am not only willing, I am anxious, that light from all quarters should be shed upon the subject; that nothing should be hidden with regard to it; that no information bearing upon it should be suppressed; and that whenever the people of this country come to a determination of the problem it involves, they should come to it with minds fully

informed of all the facts which can serve to guide them to a wise decision.”—1872.

THE STATE CHURCH IN ENGLAND AN ANACHRONISM.  
—“During the thirty years that I have given special attention to the State-Church system, all the main arguments by which it rooted itself in the public mind have been rent asunder by facts—all the theories (from that of grand old Hooker downwards) which gave it a hold upon reason, conscience, affection, have been pitilessly exploded. The Anglican Church, *qua* a State-Church, a Church established by law, a Church lifted by the Constitution into political ascendancy, has now its only *raison d'être* in the past. It continues to stand among us for no other reason than that it has stood so long. Logically speaking, the spring and stay of its life is gone. An institution of which this may be truly said, lacks the foremost and most indispensable condition of perpetuity. But look at other conditions. The Church is convulsed by internal dissensions. It must needs become more desperately so in proportion as thought becomes more active, and inquiry more searching, and conscience more energetic; and we know, as a matter of fact, what we should have anticipated as a matter of conjecture, that where differing, and even opposed, schools of theology are dominated by the same legal standards of doctrine and discipline, each will denounce the others as unfaithful, and severe conflicts within will exhaust the strength needed to cope with unfriendly elements

without. Then look outside the pale of the Establishment. There are first the various Nonconformist bodies. I will not estimate their numbers absolutely or relatively, because any estimate of mine would be disputed; but nobody will deny that they reach a very considerable aggregate, and to all of these bodies the State-Church, in the very nature of things, presents itself in the light of a monopoly, sometimes barefaced and repulsive, sometimes veiled and unobtrusive, but always unjust. Then glance for an instant at the great wage-earning class both in the large towns and in the rural districts—a goodly proportion too of whom possess the elective franchise. It is confessed on all hands that to the great majority of them the Church has ceased to have any attractions, though as yet it may not have called out any very active hostility.”—1871.

A STATE CHURCH INCOMPATIBLE WITH MODERN DEVELOPMENTS.—“What is the purpose—I will not say the sole, but the main purpose—aimed at by giving to the Church a political Establishment? Her prelates sit in the other House, her clergy claim and enjoy a legal and exclusive status, her parochial and other endowments have been assigned to her by law, and her Liturgy and Articles have been made part of an Act of Parliament, for the promotion, I suppose, of the spiritual interests of the people. In theory, at any rate—in that conception of it which fired the imagination and kindled the religious ardour of our forefathers—a State Church was an institution

up for the purpose of Christianising all the people of the State. And, truly, the object they had in view was so grand, so generous, so Godlike, that even we who most emphatically repudiate the means chosen to carry it into effect, can at least thoroughly understand it, and look back upon it with admiration, if not with sympathy. They meant a really beneficent thing when they allied the Church, their best ideal of human goodness, with the law, their highest ideal of human power. In those days they did not reflect that conscience and faith can no more be restrained within limits drawn around them by the law of man, than the dreams of childhood can be preserved under a glass shade. But if they made a mistake in the view they took of the congruity of the two forces—the temporal and the spiritual—and forged fetters for faith and love that could no more touch them than a bullet could wound a disembodied spirit, they aimed, at any rate, at a complete and intelligible result. The National Church, in their idea of it, expressed a national faith. It aimed at securing a national unity of belief, a national uniformity of worship, and a national identity of religious teaching by the clergy; and hence it claimed an exclusive right to employ national resources. All the souls of the nation were taken in spiritual charge by it. All were baptised into communion with it. All were bound by law to receive its teaching, and were met at every turn of life by its ministrations and

offices. That was the original conception of the Church of England, and all the legal arrangements devised to give realisation to it were of a piece with it; were marked by logical consistency; were based upon the same hypothesis—namely, that there can be no National Church which is not the Church of the whole nation. Sir, in these days we have to do with a state of things wholly incompatible with that idea."—1871.

NOT THE CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE.—"The Church of England is not now in fact, whatever she may be in profession, the Church of the whole people of England. She is the largest of the denominations into which the Christian people of this country are divided, comprising, we will say, half the population as her voluntary adherents and members, and that half, for the most part, the upper, the less dependent, and the better-to-do half of society. She can lay claim, with truth, to the bulk of the wise men, the mighty men, and the noble of this land. She lives in the esteem of the wealthy and the respectable. But it can hardly be said with truth that she has taken a proportionate hold upon the far more numerous classes beneath them. She has never—and probably less than ever in our times—overtaken **the work which she arrogates** exclusively to herself.

She claims the whole ground for cultivation, but at least a moiety of that which comes under cultivation at all is cultivated by Churches which she will not recognise. She is never likely to cover the whole



ground now. She is not, therefore, a National Church, for she neither does nor can comprehend within her ministrations—her sacramental and tuitional agency—the entire body of the nation.”—1871.

**VOLUNTARYISM IN THE EPISCOPAL BODY.**—“The Bishop of London’s Fund owed nothing to the Legislature. The beautiful structures reared by the munificent donations of the wealthy, both in the metropolis and in not a few of our provincial towns, would probably have been reared all the same if the Church to which they were made over had been independent of the State. Indeed the spontaneous liberality of Churchmen, which has thus enormously added to what I may be allowed to call the plant of the Establishment, so far from having been helped by the law, has often been hampered by its restrictive conditions, and sometimes, after a lavish expenditure of money, has been grievously disappointed in its purpose, on account of the ends to which it has been legally perverted.”—1871.

**UNIFORMITY NOT UNITY.**—“There are two kinds of unity—the one is a manufacture, the other is a growth; one is brought about by legal coercion, the other by insight and love. Compulsory unity of religious profession by every subject of the realm was the aim of the law down to the period of the Toleration Act; forced uniformity of clerical teaching is what the law since then has been content with requiring. I know not which of the two is the profounder mistake. This I believe in my soul :

that the Acts of Uniformity which stand upon our Statute Book have done more towards lowering the tone of moral and religious sentiment in this country than any other thing for which the State is responsible. Why do I think so? Because I have faith in the old proverbial saying, that corruption of the best inevitably leads to production of the worst. Sir, religious profession at command—which is intended to stand for the outward and visible sign of religious belief at command—is an unpardonable affront put upon the intellectual and spiritual nature with which the Creator has endowed us.”—1871.

DISENDOWMENT MUST ACCOMPANY DISESTABLISHMENT.—“I wish that the conditions of the problem were such as would admit of an entire separation of the question of disestablishment from that of disendowment. In thought nothing is more easy. In action, nothing could be more impolitic or dangerous. An elaborately-organised institution, whose sole object is to shape the religious faith, and guide the devotions of a community like ours, cannot safely be invested with a large amount of national property, and at the same time be freed from national control in its application of it. It is one of those instances in which self-support and self-government must go hand in hand. No wisely-ordered State can countenance an *imperium in imperio*. No enlightened subject of the State can sanction the appropriation of national resources to the irresponsible use of any

organisation of men which seeks to dominate over the spiritual part of man's nature, without taking care to set legal bounds to that domination."—1872.

AUTHENTIC INFORMATION DESIRABLE.—“I hold myself entitled to ask for this information on the ground that the Church of England, regarded as an Establishment, is a national institution. It is largely, I may say mainly, sustained by national resources. It derives its special status and privileges from national authority. It is governed by the national will, constitutionally expressed. It exists for a professedly national object. All the subjects of the realm have an equal right, within certain conditions, to claim the benefit of its offices. In its connection with the State it belongs to the whole people of the State in the same way as the army, the navy, the civil services, or the two Universities. The State therefore, represented by the Crown, has a full right to inquire into the nature, amount, and application of the property and revenues which it enjoys.”—1872.

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“It will not be denied, I apprehend, on either side of the House, that the *vis vitæ*, the moral power of Christian truth—of that truth which Parliament is so intent upon having taught daily in its elementary schools—may be, and usually is, very seriously impaired by being associated with any determination of the rulers and guardians of the Church, to withdraw or to withhold from the public inspection all authentic information on the subject of ecclesiastical

finances. It would be a misfortune, not merely to the Church of England, but to religion, if this House, by refusing to inquire, should encourage large numbers of our working men in their suspicion that national religious organisations are chiefly held together by the vast extent of their endowments." —1872.

AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION TENDS TO DEADEN CONSCIENCE AND STIFLE INQUIRY.—“There are few national calamities more to be dreaded, none which bring with them a more killing moral blight, none which more certainly deprave the higher life of a people, than for the teachers of the nation, clerical or secular, to be placed by the law of the land under strong temptation to be cowards to their own convictions. The evil effects of it may be seen in the lax tone of society, which is, perhaps, its last result—a lax tone, especially in regard to the sacred ends intended to be compassed by an Established Church. Nobody can deny, I think, that there is a striking contrast between the temper and attitude of the British mind in relation to theological propositions and in relation to those which are scientific. In the pursuit of truth commonly classed under the term ‘scientific,’ there is an ardour, an independence, a simplicity of purpose, a conscientiousness in ascertaining and stating results, which to witness is with most men to admire and to revere. All of us give credence—perhaps too implicit credence—not merely to the results of scientific inquiry, but even to the

speculative inferences drawn from them. We bow to a *consensus* of scientific men, even when the conclusions it has sanctioned cut right through the core of our pre-existing opinions. Now, let us suppose that science had been established by law as theology has been. Let us try to imagine a compromise of scientific opinions, contradictory of one another, made three centuries ago, petrified into an unchangeable standard, and protected by statute against the smallest alteration. Let us suppose national endowments to the tune of millions a year set apart to maintain it, the Sovereign bound to confess it, the Universities obliged to subscribe to it, and everybody ambitious of being somebody tempted by the prestige thrown around it to profess general concurrence in it. On a supposition of this kind, what would have been the inevitable result? Why, Sir, the authorised, the Parliamentary, the national system of scientific truth, would have had crowds of nominal adherents and very few real ones. Inquiry would have been discountenanced, new discoveries of truth would have been discredited and discouraged, and science would have sunk to the low level of becoming a thing to live by, instead of a thing to live for.”—1871.

THE “CULTIVATED GENTLEMAN” THEORY EXAMINED.—“In each of the rural parishes of this kingdom, we are told, the clergyman, maintained by national endowment, is a living link between the highest and the lowliest of his parishioners—is a cultivated gentleman, located just where there is, if

not the greatest need, at any rate the best opportunity, for diffusing both 'sweetness and light'—is the fixed centre in the parish of civilisation, of education, of charity, of piety; and I am told that I propose to abolish him and leave the people to fall back again into ignorance and paganism. Well, Sir, this portrait of the rural clergy may be in the main a true, if somewhat overcoloured picture, in not a few instances, and I do not wish to tarnish it. It exhibits one side of the case certainly, but there is also another, though my argument does not require and my inclination does not prompt me to call attention to it. Why should I find fault with the exquisite polish and beauty of the machinery, when my chief concern is with the kind of work which it turns out. These rural parishes have been in the undisturbed spiritual occupation of the clergy of the Church of England for generations past. Indeed, the clergy have all but undisputed religious sway in them. Ecclesiastically speaking, they can do pretty much as they like. Well, what, on a large scale, has been the result? What are the most conspicuous characteristics of our labouring agricultural population? Do they include 'sweetness and light?' Do they include fairly developed intelligence? Do they include a high state of morality? Do they include affectionate veneration for religion? Are these the most prominent features by which the character of our agricultural population is distinguished, and in respect of which they bear away the palm from the

inmates of towns? And the discouraging and painful answers to these queries—are they not to be found in blue-books, verified as they may be by minute personal observation? When I am asked what will become of the rural parishes if you abolish the endowments which sustain the parsons, I reply, in the first instance, what *has* become of them under the assumed advantages of those endowments?”—1871.

THE STATE CHURCH A SOURCE OF WEAKNESS AND DANGER IN TIMES OF POLITICAL CRISIS. — “It is neither rampant Radicalism nor sectarian fanaticism, but Conservative prudence, which counsels us to profit betimes by the lamentable occurrences which we are witnessing abroad. The same causes out of which sprang the political tornado which is devastating unhappy France exist in this country, though in a more latent form. The cloud no bigger than a man’s hand is visible on the horizon. It may be some years hence, or it may be sooner than we think, that a stormy conflict of principles relating to social matters will darken and trouble the political atmosphere—but, Sir, it does seem morally certain that through that ordeal which will try the strength of our national institutions to their very foundations we, as well as continental nations, are destined to pass. The worst thing I wish for the Established Churches of Great Britain is that before that time comes they may be safely moored out of the reach of political billows, and beyond the ordinary sweep

of political passions. I would have all branches of the Church, which, after all, are united in the same root, fulfilling in that day those functions which are best adapted to exalt men's motives, moderate their aims, soothe exasperation, and tone down popular clamour. And I fear, I greatly fear, that no Church will be in a fair position to do society this priceless service, which leans, either for her influence or maintenance, upon political support. The first forked flashes of revolutionary fire are sure to be attracted, and always have been attracted, by political Churches. I would fain see them all rescued from that danger. In their proper and divinely-appointed sphere, they are more likely to be out of the way of man's wrath, and will be better qualified to win man's respect and affection."—1871.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### WORK AND REST IN VACATION TIME.

1871—1874.

The Religious Equality Movement and its Public Advocates—Mr. Miall Entertained at a Banquet at Newcastle—Aggregate Conference of Protestant Denominations at Manchester on the Education Question—Letters to Mrs. Miall from Manchester, Ventnor, Looe, and York—Mr. Miall with his Constituents at Bradford—Visit to Manchester—Signs of Failing Health.

THE public work which devolved upon my father during the years 1871-1873, by the necessities of the time and of his representative position, was such as seriously to impair his health. It is true his voice was no longer needed to awaken Nonconformists to a sense of what was now required of them. The champions of religious liberty were not only able, eloquent, and fervid; they were also powerful in political influence, and sufficiently numerous to carry on a very effective warfare in the chief centres of population. The National Education League, with its headquarters at Birmingham, proved itself especially efficient in disseminating sound ideas in relation to elementary education; the Liberation Society, with its local conferences and meetings, was as active a

aggressive as ever. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, not yet the popular member for Birmingham, Reverends R. W. Dale, J. G. Rogers, H. W. Crosskey, Charles Williams, and, above all, Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., were a few among those who were always to the front, having a message to deliver, for which they never lacked hearers.

But so long as his strength gave him a voice which could pervade a public assembly, my father was one whom his friends delighted to honour. And so lavish on occasions were the preparations made with this view, that he could not without positive discourtesy refuse to be entertained and to respond to the enthusiasm of his adherents. At Newcastle, in November, 1871, the Liberals of the North of England gave a banquet in his honour, at which the present senior member for the borough, Mr. Joseph Cowen, junior, presided, who characterised my father as "a man whose name was a passport to the respect of his contemporaries, and to the undying praise of history." Responding to the toast of his health, which the chairman proposed, Mr. Miall said :—

"I have indeed faced many difficulties and much obloquy, but I can say truly that, on the whole, my life has been a happy one; and that, in following out the dictates of my conscience, and in drinking in, as it were, the cheers of my fellow-men in the prosecution of that work, I have found full satisfaction both to my mind and to my heart. I am not a man of war. I would very gladly at this moment, nay, thankfully, give up the enterprise, if my conscience recommended me to do so. It is not a pleasure to me to be not merely opposed by my

fellow-men, but abused by them. I have seen many things relating to myself, and to my work, that I would rather not have seen, although I must confess candidly that I could use the language of Brutus in reference to these things, and say, 'They passed by me as the idle wind, which I respect not.' But I would most gladly and willingly retire into the bosom of my family, and prepare for that change which must come upon all men—by reflection, by study, by withdrawal from the mere trifles of life, and by prayer. That would be far more grateful to me than to continue an enterprise which calls for much self-sacrifice, and which constantly exposes one's name to be vilified by those who cannot understand one's position. But I am not yet going to give up. There has occurred nothing yet calculated to frighten me out of the field; and if I had felt some strong temptation at different periods of my history to leave the battle to be fought by other men more competent than myself, yet, at the same time do I remember that the events of my life, under the guidance of Providence, have put in my power and within my reach a moral influence that cannot be acquired by any other person upon this subject. I will not throw that away until I am plainly bidden to throw it away. When that time comes, I shall be thankful to quit the more public scene for that which is more private, and leave other men, many of them now around me, to carry on the great work—if it is necessary at that time—to which I have consecrated my days."

A few weeks later he attended the Conference at the Free Trade Hall and Friends' Meeting House, Manchester, to which reference was made on a previous page.<sup>1</sup> This gathering, which numbered some 1,900 delegates from every part of the kingdom, was composed of Congregationalists and Baptists, Unitarians,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 320 *ante*.

Primitive Methodists, Calvinistic Methodists, and United Free Church Methodists, and the one principal object of the meeting was to consider the political relations of Nonconformists to the *leaders* of the Liberal party. It was not a move of the Liberation Society, though that Society was well represented there; it was a spontaneous uprising of the entire body of "Political Dissenters." My father took the chair at the first sitting of the Conference, and addressed his remarks principally to the education question. "Upon this clear principle," he said, "we must take our stand if we mean to achieve a satisfactory and permanent settlement of the question of national education—a united literary education by the State, separate religious education by parents or by the voluntary education of religious communities." Dissenters who had obtained distinction, but were debarred emolument at the National Universities, were there: Professor Wilkins, Mr. Neville Goodman, Mr. C. E. B. Reed, and others. Mr. Richard, M.P., was in such "form," that the audience stood cheering and waving their hands long after he had resumed his seat.

The practical outcome of the Conference was a resolution which, after affirming that "the educational policy unfortunately adopted by Her Majesty's Government is hostile to the interests of religious liberty" for reasons then detailed, went on to recommend to the Nonconformists of Great Britain that "they should not  
present as a satisfactory representative any candidate

for a seat in the House of Commons, who would not pledge himself to the amendment of the Education Act, in the sense and to the extent of the propositions adopted by this Conference; and further, to make it clearly understood that, except under the pressure of great national exigencies, they will not give any such candidate their support."

Writing to my mother from Manchester, Mr. Miall said :—

" MANCHESTER, *January 26th*, 1872.

"I am rather ashamed and have been distressed by my continuous silence, but I really could not find a place or materials for writing since the first evening of my arrival here. You will probably have seen that the Conference has been a splendid success; but you cannot gather even from the best report how complete and magnificent it has been. No mischance to mar it, no disagreement in regard to the main positions taken up, and those positions thoroughly satisfactory. And as to the enthusiasm, I have never seen anything to surpass it. A great weight of anxiety has been removed from my mind. I certainly did not remember that yesterday was the anniversary of our wedding day; but in truth the date never once entered into my mind, so wholly absorbed was I in other matters. But never mind my forgetting what day of the month yesterday was, or rather never thinking of it. I am of the same mind now as when I married you, and am equally thankful to God who has guided us up to this moment."

The motion for a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the revenues, &c., of the Church of England, which was brought forward in July, 1872, was

received coldly by the general public, and the cartoon of *Punch* representing Mr. Gladstone applying an extinguisher to Mr. Miall was probably quite in harmony with the prevailing tone of feeling. The following letters written to Mrs. Miall, the first three a few months before, and the other a few months after this debate, give indications of a gradual decline of nervous energy.

“ESPLANADE HOTEL, VENTNOR,  
*Good Friday, 1872.*

“Bad Friday you may as well call it. Raining in torrents, but no wind, and balmy air. Like Sterne’s starling, ‘we can’t get out.’ Our sitting-room on the first floor has a balcony in face of the sea, and we have been sitting outside the last two hours watching the magnificent breakers, looking for the lifting of the low-hanging clouds, but looking to no purpose, and making ourselves ‘jolly under creditable circumstances.’ The passage across yesterday was not so rough as I had anticipated, the wind being off shore. Mr. E—— was the only person who suffered by it, and his head was more affected by it than his stomach, by reason of his hat having been blown off into the sea. I went to bed before eleven o’clock, and slept well and easily till nine o’clock. The air and change of scene has done me good already, and my spirits are showing more elasticity, notwithstanding the awful damp. We meant to have walked to Black Gang Chine this morning, and to have dined at six o’clock on our return here. No go. So we have ordered dinner at two, and shall bide the chance of getting a walk after dinner.”


“BOSCARN, LOOE, *April 17th, 1872.*

“I take for granted that the telegram, which I despatched this morning, to let you know that I had got down safely

last night, has reached you before now. The journey seemed to me a very long one, and I was glad enough to get housed, fed, and bedded. This morning I am all right. I have been sitting on a garden chair on the spur of the cliff on which Boscarn stands, for about three hours since breakfast, taking in through every pore of my skin the sea air, looking down in dreamy idleness upon the outspread water, or dipping at intervals in the columns of the unread *Noncon*. I think I feel somewhat refreshed already, but have ascertained that I had got down very considerably below par. I almost congratulated myself yesterday evening that you did not accompany me; it would have so thoroughly knocked you up. We travelled at an average speed of forty-six miles an hour, stopped at but few stations, and, being in the carriage nearest to the engine, and but loosely screwed up, were knocked about in an uncomfortable fashion. Still—the journey apart—I wish you were here, you would so enjoy the situation, the scenery, the primitiveness of the village, and the freshness and natural simplicity of everything round about. I have given up this morning to *dolce far niente*. I am sorry to picture you in the hands of painters, *et id genus omne*. Please forward the *Times* daily, or I shall not be in communication with the political world.”

“BOSCARN, LOOE, May, 1872.

“I had your letter of yesterday in due course this morning, and also the *Times* and a tract from Australia. I am very sorry you have had an anxious household since my departure, and particularly that B.’s *tic-doloureux* has returned. When I left home I promised myself a good stroke of work before my return. Every facility as well as inducement for doing so is at hand. I am left to myself all the forenoon. I am really intent upon carrying my resolution into effect. But still I have done little or nothing hitherto. My brain recoils from anything but desultory thinking. My hand, as you see, is as tremulous as ever. My spirits are




good, and are improving, I think, but I seem wholly useless just now. R—— and his wife will be down here to-night, so that I have not much more prospect of work whilst I remain, which will probably be until Monday next.

“The weather with us has been fine but cold. We walk four or five miles every day. The immediate neighbourhood of Looe is exceedingly beautiful, almost as picturesque as the Isle of Wight. We usually dine at six o’clock, after which we have nothing more, and we go to bed at ten o’clock, or a little after. I sleep capitally, but am disappointed that I do not gain—at least to my own consciousness—in nervous or muscular strength. I hope, however, to feel advantage from the change after my return. We have a splendid fine day to-day. The sea very calm—the sky very blue—the hills very green and fresh. Opposite the window where I am sitting the fishing-boats are out in great numbers for mackarel—and just visible on the horizon is Eddystone lighthouse. I cannot but rejoice in it—*i.e.* in the fineness of the day, not the lighthouse—notwithstanding the unconquerable laziness of my brain.”

“WIGANTHORPE, NEAR YORK,  
*October 8th, 1872.*

“Thank you for the papers and letters. I was a little blank on Saturday when I received nothing, but surmised you might have been at Hendon. I go to Bradford to-morrow, and hope to return home on Saturday. These strong people cannot realise the idea that your physical powers have any limits. They want me to meet my constituents, which is quite right, but which I decline to do till January, 1873. They are also planning all kinds of meetings in St. George’s Hall, which, of course, I can only refuse to attend; no good in coming here.”

Two days after recording this excellent resolution he was addressing a crowded meeting at St. George’s





Hall, responding to the enthusiasm of his auditors by assuring them that he should go back strengthened and supported by the voice of that magnificent meeting, that though oftentimes depressed in spirit, partly owing to physical indisposition, "he had never wavered in his faith in the great principles he had held up to them," and that "after coming before a Bradford audience he could gather sufficient strength and courage to do any political duty that devolved upon him."

The beginning of 1873 found him again at Bradford and at Manchester attending several meetings. The improvement in his health encouraged him to hope that he could continue to represent Bradford for some time to come. In concluding one of the ablest speeches he ever delivered, he said—"I feel that you have placed me under such deep obligations to serve you faithfully, that as long as my strength lasts, as long as your preference for me over any other candidate shall last, so long I feel bound to say 'I am yours, do with me as you will.'"

To Mrs. Miall he writes :—

"LADY ROYDE HALL, BRADFORD,  
January, 1873.

"The meeting with my constituents has been held. You will have seen in the *Observer* how it passed off. I did not dread it after I got down here, and noticed the spirit of my friends. Nevertheless, I am relieved from a burden now that it is over. The hall was crammed in every part; the enthusiasm was greater (I think) than ever; the patience with which I was listened to was something to be proud of. I was

in capital voice, having been braced by a week's sojourn in the north, and having tightened my throat by a few troches, and my head being clear, I was thoroughly unembarrassed. The magnificence of the meeting was but a reproduction of what I have seen several times before, but its manifestation of respect and of kindly affectionateness touched my heart. The feeling exhibited was well typified by the expression of an old woman who waited for me after the meeting at the foot of the steps, and after grasping my hand, exclaimed — 'Warmer than ever.' I had no premeditated idea of saying what I did in relation to my future connection with the borough—it was squeezed out of me by the thorough heartiness of the meeting. My visit to Manchester was very pleasant—not much labour, and many friends. Our dinner at J—— L——'s on Monday (which, of course, was of the most *récherché* order) was followed by a deeply interesting talk which lasted till just one in the morning. Next night after delivering my lecture, I had a soothing draught of beautiful music, instrumental as well as vocal, from Miss L——, who was so delighted to entertain me in that manner that she sat up till past twelve o'clock, and said when I thanked her, 'Oh, please don't mention it, I shall never forget the pleasure I have had.' I am stronger than when I left home. My more important engagements are over. But I am sorry to say that I shall not be released until Thursday next, when I hope to see home again. I have four more meetings to attend, but they are of no great consequence. Then on Wednesday I am to meet a party of friends, as I did last Wednesday, to dinner in this house, and so finish up my engagements for this visit. Good-bye; my love to all."

"LADY ROYDE HALL, BRADFORD,  
January 23rd, 1873.

"I hope to be home to-morrow by eight o'clock P.M. The train by which I propose to travel will be due at King's Cross at six P.M., but I have made large allowance on account  
My Bradford work has been got through

without a single hitch, and I am quite as indulgently received as ever. However, as I hope to see you to-morrow, I will not enlarge. I have craved for news from home, but for good reasons I doubt not I have heard nothing this week."

The following is from a letter written after the parliamentary session ; the last which he attended :—

"HEATON MOUNT, *September 11th*, 1873.

"My hand has not been steady enough till now to admit of my putting pen to paper. I write to assure you of my affectionate thoughts of you, and of those whom you have with you. In health and spirits I am improving, but my rheumatism is very bad, a natural consequence of exposure on Tuesday. I snatch this moment to show you my handwriting, and to send my best love to yourself, and the home circle."


## CHAPTER XVIII.

### WITHDRAWAL FROM PARLIAMENTARY LIFE.

1873—1880.

1873 : Mr. Miall intimates his Intention to Retire from Representation of Bradford—Presentation of Ten Thousand Guineas—Reasons for not renewing his Candidature for Bradford—Not Intending to Withdraw altogether from Parliamentary Life. 1874 : Continued Signs of Failing Health—A Paper on Disestablishment and Disendowment read at Manchester - Visit to Mr. Lloyd at Clifton—Death of Mrs. Miall—Gradual Retirement and Isolation—Presentation of an Address on his 70th Birthday—Reply to the same.

At the close of the session, 1873, my father intimated to the Chairman of his Committee at Bradford that he could not again undergo the fatigue of contesting a Parliamentary election for the borough. "With a sense of disappointment," he wrote, "which I find it impossible adequately to express, I have been compelled by frequently recurring periods of physical weakness, to recognise the fact that my nervous energies have been so far impaired by a long life of exhausting labour, as to unfit me altogether for taking my proper part in an electoral contest of such magnitude." This determination was made public within a few months after the presentation to him of



a sum of ten thousand guineas (invested in the form of a settlement in railway securities) which had been contributed by a comparatively few friends as a token of their esteem, and "in recognition of his public services in the *Nonconformist* newspaper, and as the representative in Parliament of the principle of religious equality."

It is not difficult to understand that it was more than disappointing to him to proclaim publicly just at that moment that he was unequal to another electoral contest at Bradford, for none of his friends had shown him more consideration than his Bradford friends. The truth was, however, that he deemed it only common fairness to them "to give them ample time to look round and arrange for a candidate" in his place. He considered it would show him singularly wanting in gratitude if he did not, in the time and manner of making known to them his intention, make their convenience his first care. A well-attended meeting of his principal supporters requested him to suspend his decision in the hope that an improvement in his health would justify him, when the General Election came, in again presenting himself as a candidate. The dissolution came, however, within three months from that time, and he had no alternative but to renew, in his address to the electors, the statement of his reasons for declining to contest an election for so large a constituency.

Mr. Miall did not state, nor did he intend it to be understood, that because the candidature for Bradford

was one to which he was physically unequal, he had therefore abandoned the intention of re-entering Parliament. The press so interpreted his letter to Sir Titus Salt, and some papers, taking their cue from the *Times*, assumed that he had altogether taken leave of public life. The latter indeed descended to the meanness of intimating that he had finally given up his enterprise, ostensibly on account of advancing age and growing infirmities, but in reality because his cause was lost, and his seat insecure; to which the *Pall Mall Gazette* well replied that "he was about as little likely to tell his constituents a series of falsehoods about his health to cover a retreat as any public man in the country." My father, in making a public reference<sup>1</sup> to the anonymous writer of the *Times* article, said—"Without casting any reflection upon the writer, I should like him and the party he represents to know that I can dismiss his attempt to dismiss me, with perfect good humour, and shall probably laugh, and have laughed, at this very clever way of bowing a man out of his house before he intended to depart." He explained more fully than he could do in writing to his constituents that he was perfectly convinced that to venture again upon such an undertaking as that of contesting Bradford in his then state of health and strength, would be simply to rush upon extinction; but

<sup>1</sup> As chairman of a meeting, at the Cannon Street Hotel, to welcome Mr. J. Carvell Williams back from a lengthened tour in America, November, 1873.

“because I shun a contest at Bradford,” he added, “in consequence of the immense tax it would put upon my physical energies, I do not therefore leave Parliamentary life. It may lead to that, but that is not what I intended by it; and supposing *my* life has failed to accomplish the purpose which I had in view, the work is still advancing, and will advance, and it is not my passing off the stage that can be regarded as giving it the *coup de grâce*.”

There is little more to record of his public appearances. “The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak”—weaker, perhaps, than in his brighter moods he was willing to believe it. He recorded anew at the commencement of 1874 that it would be his happiness “until bidden by events to withdraw from his work, to labour on with unflagging zeal;” but the few attempts that he did make to resist the encroachments of age forced upon him the conviction that in the sphere of public work he must confine himself to his editorial writings, and this he continued to do, with the aid of his daughter as amanuensis, for several years.

The last political manifesto, if one may so term it, which my father delivered in person, was in the shape of a paper read before a Conference at Manchester, in November, 1874, on the “National Aspects of Disestablishment and Disendowment.” The question of disendowment was more particularly discussed—the importance of so shaping the policy of the Liberation Society during the next five years, as to

prepare for the introduction into Parliament of a thoroughly well digested, carefully constructed, national scheme of disendowment, the provisions of which, however, before the imprimatur of the Society was publicly placed upon it, adequate opportunity should be given to the Society's constituents to discuss, and to signify their opinion thereupon.

"If as the consummation manifestly approaches," said Mr. Miall in conclusion, "they whom it will rescue from a false position tell us incessantly, 'It does not come from you,' our simple reply is 'What then! it comes.' Perhaps but for our long course of persistent toil, the apprehension of disestablishment and disendowment would never have troubled the minds, nor the words which stand for them have crossed the lips, of ecclesiastical dignitaries whom the State has lifted into eminence. At any rate it is our intention to go on, filling the political atmosphere with the sound, and saturating the thoughts of the constituent bodies with a true idea of what we propose for our country and why we propose it. We neither ask for ourselves, nor for our labours, any appreciative recognition from those who recoil from the aim and end of our policy. We are satisfied in the belief that whether they like it or not, they are, and must be, fellow workers with us, and that even their jeers and taunts will help to feed the flame which is destined to destroy the idol of their trust. Using the homely words of President Lincoln, and acting in his spirit, we mean to 'keep pegging on;' and we are content to await the issue, in such form and at such time as God shall vouchsafe it."

A few months later he excuses his absence from



a very important meeting in connection with the Liberation Society by a reference to the feeble state of his health, "which imposes upon me at present," he writes, "the necessity of avoiding the demand made upon my physical powers by an evening public meeting. . . . If I am spared for a few months, I hope to regain some portion of the vital energy with which I have been so mercifully favoured during a tolerably long course of public activity." A visit of a few weeks' duration to his friend and fellow-student, Rev. D. Lloyd, then living at Clifton, afforded him a great "deal of pleasure, but without excitement," enabling him to get through the week, with its programme of mental work, without weariness. "Lloyd and I," he writes to my mother, "two old cripples, are lounging together towards better health, he more rapidly than I, but with this drawback, that he hardly expects to pass a fortnight before being laid prostrate with another attack."<sup>1</sup>

The death of Mrs. Miall in January, 1876, which occurred after a very short illness, necessarily contributed still further to weaken my father's general condition of health. Of a disposition habitually grateful and reverent, he was less disposed to repine, and succumb to the emotion of grief, than to cherish with silent thankfulness the remembrance of a happy union extending over five-and-forty years, and a passing away which was, as

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd survived his friend by more than three years, and passed away while these pages were preparing for publication.

he expressed it, a few hours after the mournful event, like a beautiful sunset. With what a truly healing, consoling effect the great verities of the Christian faith wrought upon his spirit, was indicated in nothing so much as in his tremulous but fervent repetition of the first verse of Mr. Binney's hymn, "Eternal Light, Eternal Light." He alone probably of the family circle at that moment recalled the ordination service at Ware in which Thomas Binney, formerly a student at the Wymondley College, took a prominent part; his wife, then Miss Holmes, being among those present.

So silently was his work prosecuted thenceforth for some years to come, with so little communication or contact with his political associates and fellow-labourers, that it is little to be wondered at if something like a feeling of isolation and forsakenness crept over him which the coming years would not be likely to dispel. A very cheering episode however occurred on the anniversary of his seventieth birthday, the 8th of May, 1879. A party of his friends, including Mr. John Bright, M.P., Mr. Richard, M.P., Mr. H. R. Ellington, Mr. Robert Kell, Mr. J. Carvell Williams, and some twenty others visited him at his residence, Honor Oak, Forest Hill, to present to him an address of congratulation, and to assure him of their unabated personal regard. The reply—his last message, in fact, addressed publicly to those who continued to labour in the cause with which his life had been identified—is given entire.

“ OLD AND DEAR FRIENDS,—Let me welcome and thank you, as I do, from the depths of my heart. Your visit, though not without a shade of pathos in it, is a pleasant one for me, and awakens feelings, as well as memories, which during the short span of life now left to me, I shall look back upon with much gratitude. I did not expect it, though I am not surprised at it. I worked among you too long, and received too many proofs of your kind confidence, to make it a matter of astonishment to me that you should follow me into the retirement which advanced years have forced upon me to greet me with your loving message. Pray accept my honest thanks, and my personal good wishes for you all, especially for that organisation of which you are on this occasion the representatives. Some of those who were associated with me in founding that organisation, and in watching over its infancy and stimulating its growth, have, as you remind me, entered into their rest. Others, like myself, have lost the power of active service, without, however, losing their interest in the work.

“ My great and enduring solace is this—that the movement for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control, is now far beyond the reach of personal changes. It is a moral force which has its life and vigour in itself; it is sure of triumph, though many of us perhaps will not live to see it. Like the ocean tide it rolls onward, and, in spite of casual fluctuations upon its surface, will roll onward until it

has reached the limit prepared for it. Ours, my dear friends, has been mainly, if not exclusively, a teaching work. We told the world, at the very first, the great truth we intended to impart to the understanding, and to impress upon the conscience. From this object we have never swerved. I think I may say we have been 'instant in season and out of season.' For some years we confined our efforts chiefly to Dissenters, and having indoctrinated them, as we supposed, we took a wider range, and, to some extent, varied our action.

"But while we engaged in the removal, one after another, of the practical inequalities which a Church Establishment necessarily creates, we never for a moment lost sight of the end we originally contemplated; nor did we suffer the world to lose sight of it.

"The removal of legal grievances was rather regarded as a special means to that end—a step towards it, not going very far, it is true, but still leading the mind in the right direction; and offering suitable occasions for discussing, illustrating, and enforcing our main principle. Happily we have never been disposed to compromise the claims of the great truth we took upon ourselves to advance, and we stand before the world at this moment unsuspected, unless it be by those who care not to study the course we have pursued, of being guided to issues which we have not always openly professed. It has been my privilege to work with you, my dear friends, for a

long course of years. I have but one cause of regret, and that is that my motives have been so imperfect and so mixed in what I have been allowed to do, and that my actual labours have been so inconsiderable compared with what I could and ought to have done. But it is a matter of devout thankfulness to me that my life has been mainly spent in the furtherance of an object which I can now regard with even greater satisfaction than when I started in my public career—one, the importance of which acquires a deeper tone every day that I live—one for which I am far from regretting that I spent my chief and almost undivided energies—and one, the eventual realisation of which, whatever may become of my name, will be a vast accession of good, political and spiritual, to my fellow-men. I have said not all that I wished to say, but all that I have strength to say. May you too witness the accomplishment of your work, and may the Church of England, as the instrument of regenerating mankind, ere long become free to use her great power over the souls of men, unimpeded by the shackles that worldly wisdom has mistakenly thrown around her.”

Thus bravely and hopefully did he resign his task, neither disheartened nor disappointed, but inwardly content that he had been so long upheld to contribute his thought and effort towards the accomplishment of his long cherished purpose.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### CONCLUSION.

BEFORE concluding this biographical narrative, I am anxious to refer briefly to a few circumstances and characteristics of my father's life, which I have hitherto left unnoted.

The general complexion of his religious belief is pretty well understood by those who have read his *British Churches in Relation to the British People* and *Bases of Belief*. It was his intention, however, to have given to the world a fuller exposition of his views in a volume which would probably have borne the title, *The Rationale of Religion*. This work, which was commenced about the year 1865, was left incomplete. Four chapters, on "Life in the Spirit," "The Glory of God," "The Natural Man," and "God in Christ," were written, but the exigencies of public life prevented the completion of the volume. The design of the work in the author's words was "to pass under examination the leading doctrines of Christianity with the view of considering how far

they are worthy of the sanction and trust of our reason ;” to inquire whether or not “the religious doctrines which may be held to have been evolved by the earthly career of Jesus Christ are such as reason, availing itself of all the light it can obtain, must acknowledge as worthy of unhesitating belief.” Probably the point reached by the author was something less than half of the work as it would have been if completed. The style is what would, in these days, be thought prolix, but the prolixity is that of a skilfully constructed chain of argument, each link of which is essential to the weight and symmetry of the whole. There is nothing in it which, by way of inference or statement, deals with the phases of the controversy between the so-called “scientific” and “rational” teachers on the one hand and those theological schools on the other, which belong to the time. It is an appeal to religious consciousness. If that be lacking, the arguments here adduced are quite inappropriate. It will be generally admitted, however, that a sincere seeker after the truth about God and the relationship sustained by mankind towards Him, would be aided in his search, and his reverential feeling quickened, by following out such lines of thought as are here laid down. The communication to man of life, inextinguishable life, being the acknowledged purpose of God in the revelation of Himself by Jesus Christ, the working out of this purpose by bringing men, through the constraining influence of love, into

sympathy with His design—these are the root ideas of the four chapters contained in this MS., which, fragmentary though it be, may yet be a welcome addition, if published hereafter, to the general body of Christian thought and evidence.

The Sabbath was, in my father's household, a day of rest ; but there was never observable in him that change of mien which denotes that habitual feeling and outward expression are in conflict. For as many years as I can remember he attended public worship in the morning, and retired to his study for the evening. The preachers whose ministry he attended were among the ablest of the Congregational and Baptist denomination, though not equally known to the religious world. One of the first with whom he became associated, on his settlement in London, was the venerable Joshua Harrison, who still survives ; the Revs. Alfred Morris of Holloway, Benjamin Kent of Lower Norwood, Baldwin Brown, and George W. Conder—all now gone to their rest—were men who delivered the message committed to them with great spiritual power and considerable originality of thought. With these he had more or less of sympathy. In the later years he was deeply interested in the chaste and thoughtful discourses of the Rev. S. A. Tipple of Upper Norwood. One young minister there was, however, with whom his intercourse, though occasional only, was deep and satisfying. Often did he speak of him as realising his ideal of the true preacher. This was the Rev. Alexander



McLaren, now of Manchester. At the time of their first acquaintance, Mr. McLaren was a young man, and my father had scarcely reached his prime. I have been favoured with a slight reminiscence of this time by Mr. McLaren, who writes :—


“Edward Miall had been one of my heroes in my student and early ministerial life. The *Nonconformist* had been one of my teachers, and he had powerfully influenced my thoughts for years. This generation can scarcely understand the enthusiasm with which we, who were young ministers in the forties, looked upon the leaders of the Anti-State Church movement, and their defiance of the ‘respectable Dissenters’ whose conventionalities sat heavy on our souls. But I had never spoken to him, and had the awe and reverence of youth for him, when one Sunday morning, as I stood up in my pulpit at Southampton, I saw him sitting in the middle of my small congregation. I suffered much that morning, and I am afraid I thought more about his presence than I should have done. But I remember, as if it had been yesterday, the sweetness of his quiet smile and the kindness of his words to me, then a young beginner, to whom encouragement from his lips was a great treasure. From that day we were fast friends, and in his frequent visits to Southampton, until his mother’s death, he spent much of his time with me. Our long walks and rambles in that lovely neighbourhood were to me very precious. We talked about everything that came up, and I learned to know what depths of affection, and what a sweet playfulness, and what an entire absence of affectation or assumption there was in the man whose public career called for so much vehemence of indignation, and such self-reliant isolation. I learned to know too the intensity of his personal religion, and its all-pervasive presence in his life. Many hours of heart confidence and happy frank interpretation of passing feelings and of permanent convictions recur to

me ; but my memory does not serve to recall individual traits which might suit your pages."

The nature of my father's work, and his retired mode of life, were not favourable to that intercourse with men of high intellectual attainment for which his conversational powers and his wide reading well qualified him. He was almost wholly a stranger to the great and wise men of his generation. One cannot but regret that two men of so similar a disposition, and with so much agreement in the main purpose of their lives as Mr. Miall and the Rev. F. D. Maurice, albeit with widely divergent views as to the means towards the end desired by both, should have been at no time on terms of intimacy. In the year 1865 a short controversy between Mr. Maurice and the editor of the *Nonconformist* arose upon some points of difference suggested by a letter which the former had written to the *Spectator*, commenting upon a recent utterance of Bishop Colenso—"What the Church of England would be were the views of the Liberation Society carried out, that we [in Capetown] are." Mr. Miall criticised fairly and courteously Mr. Maurice's arguments ; expressed profound respect for his personal character, and declared himself bound always to listen reverentially to his observations. The words which immediately followed, "If we cannot always succeed in grasping his ideas, that is doubtless owing to our own defective powers of apprehension," were certainly rather inaptly chosen, if the editor designed to illustrate such

"Moderation, according to the meaning they attach to it, is to think nothing with all your mind, to purpose nothing with all your heart, and to be nothing which will give marked prominence to your individuality. So also in regard to action," writes Mr. Miall, "moderation is commonly recommended in the wrong place. To give one's whole heart to the course he may see fit to adopt, is surely right, when that course has been finally decided upon. Playing with duty is a miserable thing for any man. Nothing that comes to us in the shape of obligation is too little or too trivial to be set about with resolute earnestness. To do as well as possible whatever we are bound to do, is the dictate of reason no less than of Christianity. To be turned aside from our point by every idle caviller who may feel the inconvenience of our decision, is moral imbecility, not moderation. But in settling with ourselves what were best and wisest to do, we ought to exercise foresight, considerateness, delicacy, and charity. It is at this preliminary stage that moderation is of service. We are not authorised in our zeal for any object to trample down other people's rights. We are to avoid everything by which unnecessary pain would be inflicted on the feelings of another.

"We may not indeed forego a purpose because it is objected to, but at least we may aim at carrying it into effect deftly, and with as little disturbance as may be. If we cannot scale the mountain we can go round it, and show our moderation in choosing the likeliest and least perilous path to the end we have in view. But this is not what society means when it exalts its favourite virtue. It means that you should not aim at things which it does not care to see accomplished, or should aim so carelessly as to be sure of missing them. Don't listen to society on this head ! Dare to be extreme in doing what you are convinced is required by loyalty to faith, and leave to others the praise of being praised for their moderation."



It is not contended in these pages that Mr. Miall was a man of remarkable genius; such a contention would scarcely be made by any who rightly understood the nature and extent of his powers; but in so far as inspiration is genius, he exhibited in his earliest public efforts, and continued by sedulous cultivation of mind and heart to keep fresh and clear, all those qualities which convert inspiration into works of highest influence and effect. "It is questionable," he writes, in an essay upon perseverance, "whether the world is on the whole more largely indebted to genius than to perseverance. Talent is supposed to be innate—perseverance is regarded as the child of discipline and habit. It is not every one that has or can have talent, but every one can, if he please, persevere."

"Of course, natural constitution contributes the *substratum* of the quality under consideration—but, we believe, discipline, when exercised with judgment, very rarely fails to produce it. It may be acquired even by those who have no inherent tendency towards it. But it will not take the place in our moral system, which fairly belongs to it, until it is associated with noble motives. There is nothing essentially good or bad in natural predisposition to persistent effort. It is but an instrument, and its value, like that of other instruments, depends upon the uses to which it is devoted. If they are purely selfish, perseverance degenerates into obstinacy. If they are exalted, disinterested, beneficent, it, too, rises into an heroic virtue. Perhaps it is never more worthy of admiration than when it springs out of, and wholly depends upon, religious conviction.

Most of our readers, probably, can cite appropriate living examples of what we mean—people who go on doing, day by day, what they would fain give up doing, solely because they therein give expression to their inmost faith and feeling. It demands, and generally secures, the highest reverence from all—that incessant turning of the spirit in one and the same direction, that progress of the life in one and the same upward path, which takes a man nearer and nearer to the Source and Centre of all good, all purity, all blessedness. After all, there is nothing on earth to be compared with it—the steady, unremitting, successful progress of perhaps a sorely-tempted man in the ‘way everlasting.’ This is the noblest perseverance, as it is also the most fruitful of good to mankind. They are greatly to be envied who exhibit it. Their satisfaction even now is the highest man can enjoy—and beautiful and bright will be their reward hereafter.”

The following, too, may be read in the light of his own experience. There were occasional crowning points in his career when a wider public than he was wont to touch agreed in doing homage to the principles which he laboured to expound, and recognised him as an instrument in obtaining recognition for them. At these times he expressed what was an undoubtedly genuine feeling of distaste for the applause of men. This arose probably from the conviction that the atmosphere of praise was morally depraving. Writing on “Success” he said :—


“Failure is a far less searching discipline than success. Many more men behave themselves credit-

ably under the one than under the other. The first is a summons to exertion, the last an invitation to indulgence ; and exertion rather than indulgence is, in the present state of things, the ordinary condition of moral health. The old fable is perpetually receiving new illustrations—the traveller who has braved the blasts of Boreas breaks down under the sun's rays. There is less danger to a man in swimming against the stream than in being deliciously floated down by it. The carousal after conquest is more to be feared than the struggle that precedes it. It is when men pull off their boots, don their dressing-gowns, and fling themselves back in their easy chairs, that they are most strongly tempted to forget manhood. The virtues ill assort with effeminacy, and the revelry of the victor too often leaves the door of opportunity ajar for his foe. Doing is better and safer than enjoying, though not by any means so pleasant ; but, after all, pleasure in doing is a higher order of enjoyment than pleasure in having. Life on earth is the conjugation of the verb to do—it is most at a loss when set to conjugate the verb to possess. Yet no man would choose to remain in ignorance of what it is to be successful. Neither is it best for him that he should. If accepted as a refreshment by the way, success not only yields enjoyment, but recruits the strength—but then it must be taken as a station on a journey, where thoughts of home reconcile one to shortcomings. On the whole, and especially in the prosecution of any great and beneficent enterprise, success is less inspiring than most people are prone to believe. It may prove your methods to have been well chosen, but it does nothing to justify your objects. The successful man is not necessarily the man to be envied—not always the happiest man. Human nature cannot have its own will long without becoming deteriorated by it. We are appointed to

struggle, and in struggling our highest life is developed. The time will come when the laws of our present condition will cease, and when we shall be able to bask in the sunshine of success without danger to our virility, or enervation of our virtues. Till then it is our wisdom to accept our lot, and make the best of it—to seek for our enjoyment in our work rather than what the work produces—to till the soil, and dismiss all needless anxiety about the harvest—to be more concerned that we should be right than that we should succeed; in a word, to bear ourselves like well-disciplined soldiers, with whom strict obedience is the most sacred of obligations, and who are thereby absolved from responsibility as to results. Then, so far as success is vouchsafed us, it will be grateful, so far as it is denied, it will not disconcert us. Thus living, our life will be its own success.”

Again, one may trace in the essay on “Incompleteness” evidences of that deep-seated faith in, and love of, Divine order and beauty, which sustained him throughout life, in working upon lines which in his conscience he believed would conduct men to conditions of life more consistent with the designs of infinite wisdom and goodness than they could reach while the ordinances and doctrines of religion were regulated by legislative enactments. Other minds, it is true, equally controlled by a no less ardent faith, have come to an opposite conclusion.

“Incompleteness, disorder, confusion, neglect, ruin—such are the predominant features of the destiny of humankind which obtrusively stare us in the face. Is this final? Will it be ever thus? We trust not.



There are few habitations among the many 'carcasses' which indicate the presence of life, and the purpose of the supreme Architect. The race is not abandoned. It is yet to be filled with a life akin to God's. If He build not, the workman laboureth but in vain. Man is trying his hand just now, and a poor work he makes of it. The philosophers tell us that he needs no supernal aid, and that he can do all that he is fitted to do with the simple resources he has at his command. Well, he has been making the experiment for a long while, and it has not turned out successful yet. Perhaps he will one day come to see this, to acknowledge it, and to acquiesce in it. Nay, it is not a matter of peradventure; it is certainly stamped upon the very laws of his being. And when he does so, and as he does so, this waste of confusion will gradually be transformed into a fair and glorious city—a city fit for the great King—and what is now a place of sepulchres will be full as it can hold of a beautiful and indestructible life, free, joyous, pure, and perfect."

The withdrawal from public life and comparative abstention from prolonged mental exercise, which advancing years imposed upon my father, happened at a time when he had naturally fewer resources to fall back upon than at any former period of his life. Happily his eyesight and his mental faculties were alike unimpaired, and to the last he was a great reader. He could not fail, however, to feel more keenly than in busier days the deprivations which parents must necessarily endure as life advances. The words that follow were a forecast of this experience. They reveal a disposition which was as characteristic of his later



years as of his earlier life, to interpret the ways of Providence in a spirit of reverence and with the patience of hope. Writing of "grandchildren," he says :—

"Now, we have sometimes thought that grandchildren may be looked upon as an ordinance of Divine Providence to humanise our life to its very close. If we do not thoroughly appreciate the arrangement, or fail to derive from it all the advantage it is capable of imparting, that is our own fault. Perhaps we are mistaking our right way. Perhaps we are seeking to disengage ourselves from all mortal ties, and fancy we are best preparing for the flight of our spirits upward by breaking off, as much as possible, our earthly connections. We submit that this is a misinterpretation of God's will with regard to us. If He sends us grandchildren, He sends them for our love, and care, and tender sympathy, just when we are most in danger of forgetting the claims of our race. We are not angels—we are not intended to become angels—but perfect men. Our hearts, as long as they continue to beat, should be with men, and with men's interests. So long as we love wisely we cannot begin to love too late, nor go on loving through too lengthened a period. We are not called hence as a punishment, but to higher joy, and there is no reason why we should not maintain, and, if possible, increase, our delight in our own kin (always supposing that it is subordinate) to the latest hour of our existence. 'A man's a man for a' that,' is a grand religious sentiment when properly understood. Grandchildren help to keep us men—blessings on them! And they are the loveliest preachers of the truth committed to them that we are likely to find. A great deal of nonsense has been broached

in the name and behalf of 'the gospel of humanity,' but this should not be allowed to blind us to the fact that *there is* a gospel of humanity. For our part, we prefer to study it in the little ones of the third generation, for we cannot cease to be men while they are about our paths."

In a lighter vein is the article on "Laughter," in which those who knew the writer best will be reminded of the keen relish for humour—the appreciative expectancy—with which he would welcome genuine sallies of wit or an exceptionally good story :

"A good bout of laughing is a blessing to be thankful for. He who can, at will, turn up for you the incidents of his or your own past life, and make the ludicrous side of them unexpectedly visible to you, and who uses his power reasonably and judiciously, does you an inestimable service. An old friend, a brother or sister, but especially a mother, who calls up reminiscences of your childhood and youth, making them sparkle over with irresistible fun—who knows when and how to touch your mind in its most ticklish parts, and quietly but playfully to push you from smile to chuckle, from chuckle to broad laugh, and from broad laugh to downright roars which make you hold your sides and force your eyes to gush tears—may be well regarded as carrying with them a treasure beyond all price. Over and above the enjoyment which comes with the exercise—enjoyment, however, which may sometimes bear you on to the very verge of distress—there are the wonderful renovation of life and spirits which accompanies and follows it, the chasing away of stagnant vapours, and the radiance of sunshine newly illuminating for

a while the entire region of the inner man. Depend upon it, the comic has its psychical and moral uses not less than the tragic, and a hearty laugh is as reviving as a flood of tears is relieving. Laughter, it is true, is no virtue, but its springs lie in the neighbourhood of virtue, and the most ringing and joyous laughter oftenest wells up from the precincts of an easy conscience and an innocent heart."

My father had at no time a larger income than sufficed for his very moderate requirements. Only after twenty years of labour was he able entirely to disencumber himself of all pecuniary obligations to his friends, who had, with a confidence which was never abused, helped him to sustain the burden which his enterprise entailed upon him. But he was never tempted to diverge from the straight path which he had marked out for himself. Subsequently to the period already mentioned, he became a contributor of political and social articles to the *Illustrated London News*, and continued this connection until within a few weeks of his death. Mr. John Latey, the editor of that journal, says, in reference to Mr. Miall's writings: "If I were called upon briefly to give my opinion of them, I should characterise them as noble thoughts expressed in admirable language. The clearness and sinewy compactness of his style always excited my admiration." This was the only quarter, independently of his own paper, from which he derived a regular addition to his income; and it was but natural that he should wish, as long as it was possible, to contribute to a paper enjoying so

wide a circulation, and the proprietors of which so highly appreciated his services.


During the years of reaction, 1874 to 1880, he was, as already stated, a comparatively isolated and inactive observer of public events, though never for an hour of the working day an idle man. Once or twice he appeared at a public meeting or a conference, but he knew the measure of his strength too well to attempt speech-making.

The result of the elections in 1880 was a grand tonic to him. Calling for an hour's chat with him immediately after the turn of the tide was unequivocally indicated, I found him in high spirits. "This has done me more good," he said, "than all the medicines," and there was indeed an improved tone in his bodily condition, though it did not last long.

There was still, however, enough vitality in his constitution, to make him wish to live a few years longer. He moved to Sevenoaks in the beginning of 1881, hoping that the dry invigorating air of that neighbourhood might to some extent repair the havoc which his continuous labours had made with his constitution. The change was one which seemed at first to promise substantially good effects. Escape from the region of London fogs raised his spirits, and the clear bracing air, if it did not impart elasticity and buoyancy to his physical frame, was so far reviving in its tendency as to tempt him to take more outdoor exercise than he had been able to do of

late. The arrival of spring, which, in the "garden of England," touches the woods and hills with such wondrous beauty, gave him a new taste of the sweetness of a quiet rural life. He was always a good walker, and the exercise was one of the very few forms of recreation to which he could resort. He tried at Sevenoaks to accomplish more than he had done for a long time past. The inconvenience of fatigue, and even the positive pain of walking with sore feet, were not allowed to become obstacles ; but when, after being seized with a fit of shivering, my father consented to consult Dr. Marriott, a practitioner in the town, it was intimated to him that the symptoms which he had disregarded were serious, and must be at once carefully treated. The disease, which terminated fatally, was indeed first manifested by sores on the feet and swelling of the leg. The latter symptom was subdued, and there seemed, after a few days' nursing, to be a prospect of his living for some years, if not of actual recovery. But these hopes were soon dispelled. The weakness increased, and in spite of all that watchfulness and skill could do to give the recuperative powers of the patient a chance of improving his condition, he continued to show more and more those signs of weariness and restlessness which are so often the immediate precursors of death.

"George, I have no fear of death," he said to his brother during the earlier stage of his illness ; and there was not any perceptible shrinking from the



impending stroke as the end approached. He would ask son or daughter to read a favourite chapter from St. John's Gospel, or a Psalm, and except on these occasions would speak only a word or two about matters of family interest. He took nourishment freely, and slept almost continuously, but when awake his mind appeared quite unclouded.

The end came about eight in the evening of the 29th April, 1881, without a struggle or a sigh.

The body was laid in the grave to which his wife and a beloved granddaughter had been committed in the year 1876, and a large company of mourners attended the funeral ceremony, which took place at the Congregational Church, Forest Hill; the burial taking place immediately after, at Honor Oak Cemetery. A singularly appropriate and most eloquent address was read from the pulpit by Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., who concluded with these words:—

“Alas that the capacity for work should decline when its urgency becomes more manifest, as the limited time within which it can be done becomes more contracted, while conscious that so much remains undone. We stand now over the coffin of one of whom we may say, as was said of the Master whom he loved and tried to follow, he has finished the work that was given him to do. Let us make him our example. It may not be given us to emulate him in vigour of intellect, in power of eloquence, in capacity to influence and sway the minds of other men. But let us try to follow him in his loyalty to conscience, in his fidelity to principle, in his patient continuance in well-doing, in his devotion to truth and duty, and

his unfaltering trust in God. But the time is come that we must bid him farewell—farewell to the eloquent teacher, the wise counsellor, the trusted leader, the faithful and loving friend—farewell, it may be, for some of us for a very little while, until we meet, as we hope to meet, where all sorrow and contention shall cease,

“ ‘In the blest kingdom meek of Joy and Love.’ ”

In concluding this memoir, I do not know that I can choose a more fitting tribute than these lines, which I find in the memorial number of the *Nonconformist and Independent*. They were written, as I happen to know, by one whose convictions on all matters of public policy were diametrically opposed to those of my father.

“ A burning noon, a placid eve, then rest,  
While Echo lingers o'er the words he spoke,  
Who warred with English prowess, Northern zest ;  
Nor faith with friend nor truce with foeman broke.  
How in the combat gleamed the champion's crest,  
His Paul's rough speech and Paul's rich heart confessed  
By wealth of utterance in action cast,  
And Paul's fine mind and learning's ample store,  
His bearing gentle as his gifts were vast,  
The knightly sword and palmer's cross he bore ;  
Well wielded this, and that held meekly fast,  
And gained by courage much, by patience more.  
A long campaign of Christian conflict past,  
Comes Peace, comes REST, the more than victor's REST at last.”







